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PROVINCIAL TYPES IN AMERICAN FICTION

HORACE SPENCER FISKE

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PROVINCIAL TYPES IN AMERICAN FICTION

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PREFACE

THE field of American fiction is so wide and so varied that only one phase of it has been touched upon in the present volume, — certain types of American provincial life as studied since the Civil War by authors in New England, the South, the Middle West, and the Far West. The literature of these sections of the country written since the Civil War is so embarrassingly rich that, with one exception, nothing of the flood of very recent fiction is included in the scope of this limited study. The effort of the writer has been to confine himself largely to what is rather indefinitely called "realistic" literature, and to emphasize the truth of characterization found in such fiction as has come to be generally recognized for its special significance and permanent value as a reflection of certain phases of our national life.

The present volume can, of course, be only suggestive, but if it succeeds in stimulating to an appreciative study and enjoyment of the dozen works of fiction considered, it will have largely accomplished its purpose.

In tracing the development of provincial character in any particular novel or story, it has seemed best to give

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as much as possible of the author's individuality of conception and flavor of style, rather than to indulge in long descriptive writing and cumbersome paraphrase, — in the hope that the peculiar charm of the author considered may stir a desire for more intimate acquaintance, and so lead on to a genuine appreciation of what is best in American fiction.

HORACE SPENCER FISKE.

CHICAGO, April, 1903.

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PROVINCIAL TYPES IN NEW ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE FIELD

If, in the fiction written in America since the Civil War, there has not yet appeared the long-looked-for great "American" novel, there has nevertheless been written much that is a true and delightful reflection of genuine American character, particularly of that character as seen in the country and in those sections that have been least affected by the progress of a growing national unity. American literature may, in fact, be said to be made up of an aggregation of sectional literatures — the literatures of New England, the South, the Middle West, and the Far West. This aggregation naturally lacks unity, but it is all American; and perhaps at some time these diverse characteristics may be fused by some masterly writer of fiction into a harmonious whole, which shall, by its vast variety yet unifying American spirit, be recognized as *the* great American novel.

From the time of the production of "Rip Van Winkle" and "Sleepy Hollow" by Washington Irving, of the "Leatherstocking Tales" by James Fenimore Cooper, and of "The Scarlet Letter" and "The House of the Seven Gables" by Nathaniel Hawthorne, to the present, the men who have

done the most effective literary work and shown us most vividly certain phases of American life have usually been those who wrought in somewhat circumscribed fields — fields that they personally knew and loved. And among the writers of so-called "realistic" fiction in America none has had a more distinct place as a leader or a wider recognition among readers than William Dean Howells. Although born in the Middle West, Mr. Howells lived for a number of years in Boston, and notwithstanding his later life in New York, he is still recognized as distinctly and successfully a portrayer of New England character. Three of his finest achievements in fiction have to do almost entirely with New England life, — "A Modern Instance," "The Lady of the Aroostook," and "The Rise of Silas Lapham." These are all in what is known as his "earlier" manner, before his literary art became so subtle, sociological, and photographic, and give in a remarkably real way various phases of that typical New England character which the world has come to believe combines in itself many of the elements of the American national mind. In the first-mentioned book Mr. Howells's characterization of Bartley Hubbard as the "smart" young newspaper man, who is reading law in 'Squire Gaylord's office, and who later wooes and wins and divorces Marcia, the 'Squire's daughter, is so masterly that at one time we can hardly help admiring the breeziness and audacity and acuteness of the character, and at another we are driven in repulsion from its cheapness and baseness and brutal cynicism. And when the old 'Squire — "Mr. F. J. Gaylord, of Equity, Equity County, Maine" — pleads in the Tecumseh court-house in his own daughter's behalf, and charges his son-in-law with perjury, the pathos and dramatic quality of the scene go far to divert from Mr. Howells the

oft-repeated charge that he is enamored of the commonplace.

As Mr. Harry Thurston Peck, the editor of *The Bookman*, remarks of "The Lady of the Aroostook," it would be difficult to find in American realistic fiction a more happily developed and delightful story than that of Lydia Blood, the provincial New England girl, who, reared in the grim and almost joyless rural community of South Bradfield in the hills of Northern Massachusetts, shows herself on board the sailing vessel *Aroostook* to be, unconsciously to herself, but very charmingly to her exclusively male companions, a genuine "lady," — though to the eye of the European critic such a middle-class provincial type could hardly come under the designation of "a lady" at all. And in Venice itself, under the well-meant but embarrassing surveillance of her half-Europeanized aunt, Lydia is as easily the true and self-possessed and irresistible "lady" as she was under the eyes of the chivalrous old sea-captain Jenness, the vulgar and drunken Hicks, or the hypercritical and cynical Staniford. Mr. Howells has given to this unique story a distinctly provincial setting, his opening and closing chapters bringing before the mind with almost perfect art the characteristic figures of fussy but undemonstrative Aunt Maria, Deacon Latham, the domesticated and uncertain old grandfather, Ezra Perkins, the dumb and formal driver of the yellow Concord coach, besides the picture of the "blue-cold" meeting-house, the savage desolation of the snow-hidden hills, the graveyard, as animated as the rest of the village, the sheet-iron stove in the parlor, the horsehair furniture, and the pea-green lamp with the red woolen wick that lights up this typical New England village with an immortal glow.

But the most distinctively and broadly national figure that

Mr. Howells has drawn is probably that in "Silas Lapham," — the character of the paint manufacturer, that typical product of the American *nouveaux riches*, who has struggled out and up from the bleak Vermont hills into a prosperous and expanding business in Boston, and who yet hangs suspended above the precipice of social failure when he pitifully discovers that his hard-earned money cannot buy him position or friendships or culture. Here are the braggadocio of the self-made man who is praising his creator and is yet self-depreciative, the shrewd and refreshing humor, the instinctive generosity and genuine nobility, the undying energy and sure eye to the main chance, and the merciless conscientiousness that pursues even to self-ruin — these are all here, united in a Yankee nature that stirs one's sense of the ridiculous, the pathetic, and the positively heroic. And much of this is felt even in the first few pages of "The Rise of Silas Lapham," through the subtle and vivid power of the novelist, — in that memorable interview with Bartley Hubbard, who seems unerringly to penetrate every weak little vanity of the boastful and self-centered man, and draw from him without reserve the wearisome minutiæ of a commonplace life.

Another convincing study of a rural type under urban conditions is found in "The Minister's Charge," in which, through the unwilling agency of a Boston preacher, Lemuel Barker, a raw New England boy from Willoughby Pastures, smitten with the egotism of literary creation, comes to the city bent on publishing a poem; and by strangely connected causes the poor boy is driven on from one emergency to another, through love and poverty and ambition and shame and self-sacrifice, to an apparently impotent end. And with him are involved such strongly

provincial types as his first sweetheart, Statira Dudley, her garrulous and insuppressible companion, 'Manda Grier, and his strong-minded, self-forgetting, bloomer-wearing old mother.

Among the many writers who have attempted to set forth the salient characteristics of the provincial New England type, few can be ranked above Miss Wilkins, whose realistic art has a sure and sympathetic touch for the grim, gaunt, indomitable figures that move through the fields and remoter villages of the Puritan's country. In her "Humble Romance," her "New England Nun and Other Stories," and her more ambitious work, "Pembroke," she has given faithful and vivid pictures of rural and community life, — in fact, they are often so closely drawn as to be almost painful in their embodiment of merciless conscience, unrelenting will, joyless religious life, a certain moral intolerance, and a lack of the sweet and lovable and beautiful. Will and conscience dominate some of her stories like passions, and they sometimes run to tragic and grotesque excesses in their manifestations, which may be true enough and characteristic enough, but which make us exclaim at times, "Why this eternal round of unrelieved rigidity and self-imposed tragedy and misery?" But here and there, in truth to life also, are the lighter touches of humor and charity and intense but undemonstrative love.

Many of Miss Wilkins's people are so "set," as the Yankees themselves would say, that they almost pass the bounds of the reader's patience; and, as in "Pembroke," a young man will sooner give up the girl he loves than go back on a rashly spoken word, — a father will sooner see his daughter go through a long life unmarried and em-

bittered than suffer himself to speak a word of apology for a hot-tempered outbreak. This idolatry of self-esteem and self-will is most vividly shown in the dominating spirit of Deborah Thayer in "Pembroke" — a veritable she-Puritan, who stands before us thin-lipped, insistent, unforgiving. And her son, Barney Thayer, is like unto herself — as "set" and as hopelessly stubborn. With his new house all but finished, with an attractive and loyal woman, Charlotte Barnard, ready to marry him, he comes for almost the last of many visits to woo his sweetheart. But on that fatal night his will clashes with the equally imperious will of his prospective father-in-law, Cephas Barnard; the old man orders him from the house, and Barney Thayer vows never to cross the threshold again, — "I never will, by the Lord Almighty." The door slams after him, but his sweetheart, Charlotte, eagerly follows him, calling his name; yet he does not even turn his head. And through long years he kept his stubborn word, the new house occupied only by the ghost of a thwarted love, and the lives of himself and the woman he loved dragging on in needless misery and daily bitterness.

Yet underneath all this apparent rigidness of nature is glowing in the book the intense flame of passion that will not be put out, and in its scorching effect even the grim stiffness of Deborah Thayer suffers. For her own daughter, Rebecca, when thwarted by her mother in her strong love for William Berry, secretly yields to his passion; and as the languid, pining girl is submitting to the fitting of a new dress, which is being made by her mother as a sort of consoling gift, the truth that she has loved not wisely but too well is only too evident. Her mother orders her from the house even in the midst of a snow-storm —

she is more relentless than the fury of the storm itself. Later, after Rebecca's forced marriage and the birth of her dead child, her mother seems ignorant of her existence; and no one ventures to mention Rebecca's name in her presence.

The reader is sometimes tempted to inquire if there is really blood in the veins of some of these people presented by the pitiless art of Miss Wilkins. Mr. Barrie's "Auld Lichts," grim as they are, are softly human in comparison with some of these New England types. But in extenuation it must be said that characters like Deborah Thayer are often religious in their motives and action, and confuse their own will with the imagined will of the God of all. And this is pathetically illustrated in the punishment of her invalid son, Ephraim, which resulted so unexpectedly in his death. His mother was doing it, she thought, for his present and eternal good.

A kindlier, sweeter phase of New England life is seen in the satisfying art of the books written by Sarah Orne Jewett, who, for subtle sympathy with her characters, an appreciation of their finer, higher qualities, and a medium of expression Greek-like in its simplicity and serenity, must take a very high place in the portrayal of provincial New England types. In "Country By-Ways," "Tales of New England," and "A Country Doctor," and especially in "A Marsh Island" and "Deephaven," Miss Jewett has done very much to preserve in permanent literary form the quaint and beautiful traits of rural New England. As one recalls the people in "A Marsh Island," the exquisite and lovable figure of Doris Owen emerges in the dawn-light of that memorable morning when she made her trembling and heroic way to Westmarket to confess her love

and dissuade her angry lover from embarking for the Banks. And there is Doris's dear old father with the touch of sentiment and imagination and love of nature, and the tireless and ambitious mother, and Jim Fales, and the jealous but virile and constant Dan Lester, — a group of rural figures made all the more interesting by the unique background of quiet beauty and color that Miss Jewett knows how to draw so easily and so effectively.

In Miss Jewett's "Deephaven" we have a collection of short sketches and stories that show her art at its highest, and so realistic as to lead many readers to suppose that "Deephaven" is a veritable New England seaport known to themselves. Miss Jewett, however, in her preface, disclaims any close identity in her characterizations, and denies that "Deephaven" is on the actual map of New England. The two Boston girls who spent that memorable summer in the quaint old Brandon house at Deephaven make delightfully fresh and interesting figures amid the decayed aristocracy and retired sea-captains and talkative widows and sedate spinsters of the inactive but charming old seaport. The optimistic and humorous Mrs. Kew, wife of the lighthouse keeper, the reminiscent "Widow Jim," who could make rugs and preside at funerals, and had "faculty"; the pipe-smoking, story-telling old sea-captains, like Captain Isaac Horn; Captain Lant, who, though now devoted to farming, had to take "a day's fishing every hand's turn, to keep the old hulk clear of barnacles;" the lame, red-shirted "Danny," with his cat and hospital stories; and the visionary Captain Sands, who had a sort of marine museum and was a specialist in weather and the mysteries of telepathy, — some of these types seem done from the life, and over them all is a

misty light of remoteness and tradition that softens and endears.

Another volume that is redolent of New England sea air is "Caleb West, Master Diver," which was written out of the actual experiences of the author, F. Hopkinson Smith, who, as is generally known, is a marine engineer and architect, as well as a painter, lecturer, and novelist. The book is alive with struggle against wind and wave, with a sense of the truly heroic in the daily achievements of such honest and noble types as Captain Joe and Caleb West — two as real men as often walk in the pages of a novel. They are rough, weather-beaten men, but not coarse — and their work as builders of submarine structures is a definitely shaping influence that accounts for iron in the blood and a splendid self-reliance. And their moral make-ups are as wholesome and invigorating as the sea air in which they work and live. Aunty Bell's kitchen is a place to eat in and to be happy in, and her husband's gospel of compassion and forgiveness for the "hoodooed" but sweet-natured Betty, the master diver's young wife, has in it a touch of the divine. The "Pocomokian," Major Slocomb, from the South, is suggestive of that even more delightful character, Colonel Carter of Cartersville, — a type of inconsequential, shiftless, but chivalric and engagingly social, qualities that Mr. Smith has a peculiar aptitude in depicting.

New England has proved a rich theme for portrayers of provincial character, as we have already seen, and a long list of fiction writers covering this particular field might easily be made out; but it is sufficient for our present purpose to mention only a few of the more conspicuous, like Elizabeth Stuart Phelps-Ward, who excels in the emotional

force of her intense characters; Thomas Bailey Aldrich, whose "Stillwater Tragedy" presents with great vividness and charm the life of a New England factory town; Sally Pratt McLean, with her minutely finished portraits of "Cape Cod Folks"; and Arlo Bates, whose "Diary of a Saint" presents, in striking contrast to the title, one of the most intense local dramas in New England life.

Although New York and Pennsylvania have not been so prolific a field as New England in furnishing provincial literary types, the former state found in Harold Frederic a sympathetic interpreter of his native valley of the Mohawk, and he produced a unique series of local novels in "Seth's Brother's Wife," "In the Valley," "The Lawton Girl," and "The Damnation of Theron Ware." Rebecca Harding Davis has written several tales with a Pennsylvania background, and Margaret Deland made a village in Allegheny County the scene of "John Ward, Preacher."

CHAPTER II

"THE RISE OF SILAS LAPHAM" BY WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

PERHAPS the most virile and typically American character created by Mr. Howells is that of Silas Lapham, the paint manufacturer, who struggled up the ladder of material prosperity out of the hills of Northern Vermont, expanded into a great business in Boston, where for the sake of his two daughters he made a pathetic effort to achieve something of a social position, and then through others' dishonesty, his own speculation, and an unrelenting conscientiousness, collapsed financially, and was obliged to return to his starting-point in the little Vermont town of hard beginnings.

In the first few pages of the novel, by means of a newspaper interview, the author has depicted, with a vivid thoroughness and a humorous touch, the laborious and self-made career of the central figure of the story. Bartley Hubbard, a shrewd and cynical newspaper man, is writing what he calls the "Solid Men of Boston" series for *The Events*, and he desires to include the millionaire paint manufacturer in the list. As Bartley waits expectantly, with his note-book on his lap, Lapham, absorbed in his business correspondence, suddenly swings in his swivel-chair, so as to face his interviewer, and asks, with characteristic humor,

"So you want my life, death, and Christian sufferings, do you, young man?" Bartley's reply, "Your money or your life," suggests to Lapham the rather pungent comment, "I guess you wouldn't want my life without the money." Bartley, however, insists that he doesn't want Lapham's money without his life, but adds significantly, "You're just one million times more interesting to the public than if you hadn't a dollar." And thereupon, while he waited for Lapham to continue, Bartley jotted down this graphic individual sketch in his note-book: "In personal appearance Silas Lapham is a fine type of the successful American. He has a square, bold chin, only partially concealed by the short reddish-gray beard, growing to the edges of his firmly closing lips. His nose is short and straight; his forehead good, but broad rather than high; his eyes blue, and with a light in them that is kindly or sharp according to his mood. He is of medium height, and fills an average arm-chair with a solid bulk. . . . His head droops somewhat from a short neck which does not trouble itself to rise far from a pair of massive shoulders."

When Lapham expressed a doubt as to where the interviewer wanted him to begin, Bartley rather pleased his victim by remarking, "Might begin with your birth; that's where most of us begin." Lapham gives the information that he was born some fifty-five years before, pretty well up under the Canadian line, but "I was bound to be an American citizen of *some* sort, from the word Go!" "Parents poor, of course," suggested Bartley. "Any barefoot business? Early deprivations of any kind, that would encourage the youthful reader to go and do likewise? Orphan myself, you know." But the abiding sense of the hard seriousness of his early struggles stirred the quiet

self-respect of Lapham to say that, if the interviewer regarded Lapham's early life as a joke, the interview was at an end. The unabashed Bartley only wrote in his notebook how Lapham's parents "taught their children the simple virtues of the Old Testament and Poor Richard's Almanac."

When Lapham again grew reminiscent he felt a lump in his throat at the tender thought of his mother's assiduous care and heroic self-sacrifice for her boys: "She was a little, frail thing, not bigger than a good-sized intermediate schoolgirl; but she did the whole work of a family of boys, and boarded the hired men besides. She cooked, swept, washed, ironed, made, and mended from daylight till dark, — and from dark till daylight, I was going to say; for I don't know how she got any time for sleep." He recalls how she always found time, too, to go to church, to teach her boys to read the Bible, and to "misunderstand it in the old way." "She was *good*. But it ain't her on her knees in church that comes back to me so much like the sight of an angel as her on her knees before me at night, washing my poor, dirty little feet, that I'd run bare in all day, and making me decent for bed. . . . I can feel her hands on my feet yet!" Whereupon Bartley, the unsentimental, looked down at Silas's No. 10 boots and gently whistled through his teeth.

Lapham's suggestion that he would like to paint his mother's hard and stunted life for the modern women who complain of their empty existence is a cue to the interviewer to swing his subject over to the matter of the mineral paint that has proved the foundation of Lapham's present fortune. The latter eagerly relates how his father found the deposit of mineral paint in a hole made by the

upturned roots of a tree that had blown down. But the country at that time was too poor for paint, and Silas's father had no facilities for putting it on the market. So that the paint-mine got to be a kind of joke with the Lapham family. Finally all the other boys went West and took up land, while Silas stayed by the farm, "not because the paint-mine was on it, but because the old house was — and the graves." Even Silas himself went off, to try Texas, but after three months of it he found that Vermont was "good enough" for him. He married the school-teacher in Lumberville, and together they ran the hotel. His wife urged him to "paint up," till at last he yielded, and together they drove out to the farm and brought back "a bushel of the stuff." "I tried it crude, and I tried it burnt; and I liked it. . . . There wa'n't any painter by trade in the village, and I mixed it myself. Well, sir, that tavern's got that coat of paint on it yet." When Silas Lapham got the first coat on, his sympathetic and filial memory called up the picture of his old father who had failed, and in recounting the incident to his interviewer Silas sadly remarked, "I've noticed that most things get along too late for most people." He recalled how his wife Persis came out from the kitchen with her sleeves rolled up and sat down beside him on the trestle, and how he asked, "What do you think, Persis?" "And says she, 'Well, you hain't got a paint-mine, Silas Lapham; you've got a *gold*-mine.'"

As a memorial to his father, Silas wanted to call the paint the "Nehemiah Lapham Mineral Paint," but finding the name too long he had stamped on every barrel, keg, bottle, and package, big or little, the initials and figures "N. L. f. 1835, S. L. t. 1855," which being interpreted read, "Father found it in 1835, and I tried it in 1855."

By analysis a man from Boston showed that the ore contained seventy-five per cent of the peroxide of iron, and the scientific phrase was pronounced by Lapham with a sort of reverent satisfaction, being accented as if it were spelled "purr-ox-*eyed*." Silas enthusiastically related how the expert sat down and told him that he had a paint that would drive every other mineral paint out of the market. "'Why,' says he, 'it'll drive 'em right into the Back Bay! That paint has got hydraulic cement in it, and it can stand fire and water and acids. When you've got your arrangements for burning it properly, you're going to have a paint that will stand like the everlasting hills, in every climate under the sun.'" And then, after Lapham himself had indulged in a eulogy of the manifold virtues of his paint, detailing how it could be used on the inside of a cistern, or a bath-tub, or a steam-boiler, or on the outside of a brick wall, or a railroad car, or a steamboat deck, the newspaper man naïvely suggested, "Never tried it on the human conscience, I suppose." To which Lapham gravely replied, "I guess you want to keep that as free from paint as you can, if you want much use of it. I never cared to try any of it on mine."

On shelves over his office desk Lapham pointed out with peculiar pride the finest grade of his paint put up in flawless glass jars, with the different tints showing through; and Bartley read on one of the labels, "The Persis Brand," which Lapham said, with much satisfaction, he had put on the market in honor of his wife on her last birthday. In his grateful pride over the stanch coöperation of his wife in their early struggles to succeed with the paint, Lapham reminded his interviewer how he used to say,

"It wa'n't the seventy-five per cent of purr-ox-eyed of iron in the *ore* that made that paint go; it was the seventy-five per cent of purr-ox-eyed of iron in *her*."

Lapham's esthetic sense could find nothing wrong in covering the scenery with advertisements of his paint, and, as he told Hubbard, he never could see anything so very sacred about a big rock that it wouldn't do to put mineral paint on it in three colors. "I wish some of the people that talk about the landscape, and *write* about it, had to bu'st one of them rocks *out* of the landscape with powder, or dig a hole to bury it in, as we used to have to do up on the farm; I guess they'd sing a little different tune about the profanation of scenery." On Lapham's insisting that the landscape was made for man, and not man for the landscape, his interviewer ironically remarked, "Yes, it was made for the stove-polish man and the kidney-cure man;" and when Silas, in his attempt to resume his narrative, asked where he was, Bartley softly suggested, "decorating the landscape."

But the Civil War proved too much for the mineral paint, and Lapham's wife, seeing a providence in the failure to sell it, recognized that he had a country worth fighting for. "Well, sir, I went. I knew she meant business. It might kill her to have me go, but it would kill her sure if I stayed." And the fruit of his going was a ball in his leg, which he called his "thermometer." His return from the war was the beginning of wider operations in the paint business, and, much against his will but with his wife's urgent advice, he took a partner with capital, who knew nothing about paint; and in a year or two the partner withdrew with, as Bartley suggested, "the experience." This episode, as Bartley surmised, was the sore spot in

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Silas's memory, and was to have a ruinous significance in his later life. But as he went on, Lapham's enthusiasm over his paint grew unbounded, — his paint was almost his religion. "You pass a ton of that paint dry through a blast-furnace, and you'll get a quarter of a ton of pig-iron. I believe in my paint. I believe it's a blessing to the world. When folks come in, and kind of smell round, and ask me what I mix it with, I always say, 'Well, in the first place, I mix it with *Faith*, and after that I grind it up with the best quality of boiled linseed oil that money will buy.'"

Leaving his interviewer at the newspaper office, Lapham drove to Nankeen Square at the South End of Boston, where he had not built, but had bought very cheap, — with a characteristic sense for a bargain, — a house that belonged to a "terrified gentleman of good extraction who discovered too late that the South End was not the thing, and who, in the eagerness of his flight to the Back Bay, threw in his carpets and shades for almost nothing." Neither Silas Lapham nor his sensible, self-reliant wife had ever felt the personal disadvantage of being in an unfashionable neighborhood; but after Mrs. Lapham and her daughters had accidentally, on a summer trip to a Canadian watering-place, been thrown in somewhat intimate contact with a cultivated and aristocratic Boston family with an eligible son in it, it began to suggest itself that a new home "on the water side of Beacon Street" might be a social advantage to the daughters.

In discussing with her husband the impression these refined Bostonians had made on her, — they made her feel, she said, "as if we had always lived in the backwoods," — she asked him if he knew them, and added, with

reference to the head of the family, "What business is he in?" "I guess he ain't in anything," said Lapham. "They were very nice," said Mrs. Lapham, in impartial tone. "Well, they'd ought to be," returned the Colonel, — "never done anything else." When his wife insisted that they never seemed "stuck up," her husband with the all-sufficient pride of new-won wealth ironically answered, "They'd no need to — with you. I could buy him and sell him, twice over." In illustration of his proud financial ability, when his wife received from Mrs. Corey a lithographed circular asking for subscriptions to a very praiseworthy charity, Lapham promptly drew his check for five hundred dollars, which his wife promptly tore in two, remarking as she did so that a hundred would do, as she "didn't want to show off before them."

After much artful broaching of the subject of building on his new lot in Beacon Street, the Colonel persuaded his wife to drive over and see the site, and as they jogged along they talked of the different kinds of architecture along the streets and admired the worst. Now and then they noticed a young man lifting his hat in response to some salutation from a window, and it suggested to Lapham that his own girls wouldn't "look very bad behind one of those big panes." This called to the mother's mind the thought of the young Corey whom they had met the summer before in Canada and been so much impressed by. Upon her husband's inquiry as to whether the young man was with his family in Boston, and her reply that he was on a ranch in Texas with a friend and had apparently got something to do, the Colonel sarcastically commented, with all the confidence of an energetic business man, "Yes; gentiemaning as a profession has got to play out in a generation

or two." At "tea" that evening, with Penelope and Irene, the two daughters, his wife, in her affectionate banter, intimated that if her husband wanted to he could run his own furnace and shovel his own sidewalk — until he got over to Beacon Street anyway. Whereupon the redoubtable Colonel asserted, "A man can be a man on Beacon Street as well as anywhere, I guess." "Well, I'll do the wash, as I used to in Lumberville," said Mrs. Lapham. "I presume you'll let me have set tubs, Si." But, despite the joking about it, the Colonel seemed really to have made up his mind to build on "the water side of Beacon."

Lapham's architectural ideas were definite enough, but they were curiously antiquated and inharmonious. In the merciless hands of an architect, however, a revolution was wrought in the Colonel's crude ideas of a house; for, as the author remarks, nearly all architects are skillful in playing upon "that simple instrument, Man." Of all the construction the pile-driving interested Lapham most, and every day he would drive over with his wife to see and hear the engine carry the big iron weight to the top of the framework and let it drop with a mighty force on the iron-bound head of the pile. "By gracious!" he would say, "there ain't anything like that in *this* world for *business*, Persis!" One day, as they were inspecting the new house, the Colonel's former partner, Rogers, whom Lapham had crowded out just before his great success came, appeared on the scene and made a very uncomfortable situation. His wife accused Lapham of having made his paint his god, and charged him with not being able to look his old partner in the face, — at which Lapham lost his temper, turned his horse suddenly toward home, and remarked hotly, "I guess you don't want to ride with me

any more to-day." His wife, in her indignation, had the last word: "Don't you ask me to go to that house with you any more. You can sell it, for all me. I shan't live in it. There's blood on it." Yet they ignored their quarrel later, and the wife recognized that in a way his paint was something more than a business to him; it was a sentiment, and almost a passion, — the poetry of a nature that was otherwise so intensely prosaic.

A few days later the family went over to look at the interior arrangements of the house; and when at the father's invitation the daughters sat by his side on a trestle in the bay window and somewhat scornfully laughed at the position, the Colonel, rather enjoying their superior ways, reminded them that their mother wasn't ashamed to sit with him on a trestle the first time he ever tried his paint on a house. "Yes; we've heard that story," said Penelope, "we were brought up on that story."

Upon young Corey's unexpected entrance and his introduction to the father, the Colonel, with a little shock to his rather sensitive daughters, jocularly asked, "Have a trestle?" And in a free and somewhat boastful tone the Colonel enlarged upon his ideas and plans, declaring that there wouldn't be an unpleasant room in the house, and that they were going to have the best rooms for themselves, and that he had the best architect in Boston. "And if money can do it, I guess I'm going to be suited. . . . I started out to build a forty thousand house. Well, sir! that fellow has got me in for more than sixty thousand already, and I doubt if I get out of it much under a hundred. . . . It's just like ordering a picture of a painter. You pay him enough, and he can afford to paint you a first-class picture."

Young Corey's appreciative remark as to how well the Memorial Hall and the Cambridge spires worked up from the bay window started another egotistical strain of garrulity on the Colonel's part: "Yes, sir, it's about the sightliest view I know of. I always did like the water side of Beacon. . . . When they talk about Commonwealth Avenue, I don't know what they mean. It don't hold a candle to the water side of Beacon." The Colonel's continued assertiveness was hard for his daughters to hear, and when they got home Penelope, the elder, entertained her sister Irene with a very good imitation of her father's characteristic talk. However, in recounting his experience at the new Lapham house, Tom Corey said to his father, with reference to the Colonel: "Do you know that, in spite of his syntax, I rather like him? . . . He struck me as very simple-hearted and rather wholesome. Of course he could be tiresome; we all can; and I suppose his range of ideas is limited. But he is a force, and not a bad one." And the Colonel on his part had taken a great liking to Tom Corey, remarking emphatically to his wife, "If I had that fellow in the business with me, I would make a man of him."

What was his delighted surprise, a few days after, to have the identical young man, son of the well-known and aristocratic Bromfield Corey, open his office door and ask if the Colonel would take him into the mineral paint business! The Colonel would have given any sum of money if his wife could have overheard the request, the approaches of the aristocratic are so gratifying to the ambitious pride of the suddenly rich. But Mrs. Corey's insinuation that young Corey would feel himself too good for the mineral paint busi-

ness made the Colonel a little resentful, and his first attitude toward the young man was that of making him appreciate how good a thing the Lapham paint was. However, when young Corey declared that he had already made inquiries about the paint and believed in it, Lapham warmed and softened toward him in every way. He enthusiastically showed him a photograph of the locality of the mine, adding, as if the photographic art had slighted the features of some beloved face, "it don't half do the place justice." Then he went on and on, telling his paint story with loving and unsparing detail. Although the young man offered to represent the business in foreign parts without salary and purely on a commission, the matter could not be settled so quickly, and the Colonel took him down to his summer cottage at Nantasket to consider the proposition more fully. And when, at the landing, he took the reins from his coachman and told Corey to get into the back seat with his daughter Penelope, who had driven to the boat for her father, the Colonel gave her a wink of supreme content at having so unexpected and aristocratic a guest, and exulted in his prospective triumph over Mrs. Lapham. As he would himself have said, he was feeling "about right."

The matter of business having been fairly settled after "tea," the family and their guest met in the parlor; and a volume of "Middlemarch" lying on the table suggested to Corey a question about George Eliot, which only disclosed the fact that the younger daughter, Irene, did not know who she was. Lapham declared himself in favor of stereopticon lectures and the theater — something to make you laugh, and confessed that all he could find time to read was newspapers. "When the girls want a novel, I

tell 'em to get it out of the library. That's what the library's for." Lapham was hardly a bibliophile, though as near to being one as many other business men in modern life.

When, by what he imagined was his finesse, he got the girls to take Mr. Corey out to show him the night view of the hotels from the rocks, he exultingly gave his wife a detailed account of how the young man happened to be their guest. To his wife's mind the chief significance of Corey's request to come into the business was its supposed reference to their younger daughter's hand; and her husband had evidently thought of the same thing, although he pretended that it had never occurred to him before. But his wife penetrated his thin disguise and reminded him that if the young man didn't "take a fancy" to Irene, the Colonel could hardly do him justice, even if he had taken him into the business. The Colonel protested against this interpretation of his motives and his ambition for his daughter; but in reality having this scion of a well-known family, with an assured social position, apply for a place in his business and possibly, later, for his daughter's hand, made up one of the sweetest moments in his success. Next to winning the school-teacher in Lumberville as his wife, the possibility of Corey's permanent connection with his family had moved his heavy imagination.

Yet in all his business relations with young Corey he was careful to preserve the pride that comes from self-making, and he in no way distinguished the young man from the rest of his clerks. Indirectly his immense satisfaction over the presence of Corey in his office would be illustrated by some such remark as the following: "Did you notice that fellow at the desk facing my type-

writer girl? Well, sir, that's the son of Bromfield Corey — old Phillips Corey's grandson. . . . He's got charge of the foreign correspondence. We're pushing the paint everywhere."

His actual liking for the young fellow and genuine appreciation of his parts even deflected the Colonel's earlier judgment on the qualifications essential to business success. "I used to believe in what old Horace Greeley said about college graduates being the poorest kind of horned cattle; but I've changed my mind a little. You take that fellow Corey. He's been through Harvard. . . . Been everywhere, and talks half a dozen languages like English. I suppose he's got money enough to live without lifting a hand, any more than his father does; son of Bromfield Corey, you know. But the thing was in him. He's a natural-born business man; and I've had many a fellow with me that had come up out of the street, and worked hard all his life, without ever losing his original opposition to the thing. But Corey likes it. I don't know where he got it. I guess it must be his grandfather, old Phillips Corey; it often skips a generation, you know." And then the paint manufacturer grew sagely philosophical and spoke with all the certainty of self-sufficient knowledge: "What I say is, a thing has got to be born in a man; and if it ain't born in him, all the privations in the world won't put it there, and if it is, all the college training won't take it out."

All efforts of the Colonel to bring the young Corey down to Nantasket to see his family were thwarted by the ridicule of his wife, whose pride forbade any "running after" the young man as a match for their daughter Irene. All of Lapham's subterfuges and thin disguises with that

in view were penetrated by his wife's quick intuition, much to his irritation. But he always had his mare as a last resort for a spin with Corey out over the Milldam, when Lapham's chief topics of conversation were his horse and his paint, the new house and himself.

Lapham's special resentment seemed directed against Bromfield Corey, the father of his new clerk, because he made no call upon him and no social advances; but his wife, with all her sensitive pride, could see things as they were and could recognize that the two families had entirely different social relations. Her husband would ask indignantly: "Are they any better than we are? My note of hand would be worth ten times what Bromfield Corey's is on the street to-day. And I made *my* money. I haven't loafed my life away." To which came the penetrating retort of the wife: "Oh, it isn't what you've got, and it isn't what you've done exactly. It's what you are."

By the masterly diplomacy of his architect the Colonel went on from one outlay to another, under the delusion, often, that what the architect had deftly won he himself had seen or perhaps conceived, until his prudent wife was impelled to call a halt and limit the cost of the new house to a hundred thousand dollars. Incidentally, in accounting for the fact that he had an abundance of money to put into his building scheme, he confessed that he had been making a very good thing in stocks. "In stocks? When did you take up gambling for a living?" And the guilty husband protestingly replied, "Gambling? Stuff! What gambling? Who said it was gambling?" And when his wife reminded him that that was what he once called gambling, his naïve defense took this form of explanation: "Oh, yes, buying and selling on a margin. But this was a *bona fide*

transaction. I bought at forty-three for an investment, and I sold at a hundred and seven; and the money passed both times." His wife's warning prophecy, however, was, "Next time you'll buy at a hundred and seven and sell at forty-three. Then where'll you be?" "Left," admitted the Colonel. And his wife's final injunction was, "You better stick to paint awhile yet."

One night the Colonel came down to their summer cottage at Nantasket with a peculiarly radiant air, and after long guessing on his wife's part he divulged, with much happiness and a sense of relief, that greatly to his surprise his former partner Rogers — whom he had crowded out of the paint business at a time when he saw a large future for it — had called and asked for a loan, and Lapham had granted it on practically worthless security. The loan he made was of the money his wife had prevented him from putting into the new house. His wife joyfully saw in the whole transaction a kindly providence, and said approvingly, "You've taken the one spot — the one *speck* — off you that was ever there, and I'm satisfied." "There wa'n't ever any speck there," Lapham doggedly protested, "and what I done I done for you, Persis." But this generosity for his wife's sake, by the irony of fate, was later to aid in his undoing.

The long-looked-for call from Bromfield Cory had the effect on Lapham of stirring his characteristic boastfulness, and there was much self-satisfaction in the Colonel's praise of young Corey as if he were a mere office-boy. "I had faith in him, and I saw that he meant business from the start." All this to illustrate in part his own shrewd penetration. And when the father modestly and humorously remarked that he was afraid his son hadn't

inherited such business qualities from him, the Colonel compassionately said, "Well, sir, we can't help those things. Some of us have got it, and some of us haven't. The idea is to make the *most* of what we *have* got." Then he impressed upon his caller that his own (Lapham's) latent strength came into full consciousness only by the development of experience; and he added somewhat patronizingly: "And I can see that it's going to be just so with your son. His going through college won't hurt him, — he'll soon slough all that off, — and his bringing up won't; don't be anxious about it." He found it necessary, also, to call Mr. Corey's attention to *The Events*, in which Lapham's biography had appeared, but unfortunately Bromfield Corey read only the Boston *Daily Advertiser*. In reporting Corey's call that night to his wife, Lapham said, "Don't know as I ever saw a much pleasanter man. Dunno but what he's about the pleasantest man I ever did see." And then Mr. Howells, with an illuminating touch, makes this significant comment: "He was not letting his wife see in his averted face the struggle that revealed itself there — the struggle of stalwart achievement not to feel flattered at the notice of sterile elegance, not to be sneakingly glad of its amiability, but to stand up and look at it with eyes on the same level."

On the spur of Corey's call the Colonel's social ambition took a leap, — he told his wife that he was going to push the new house, and at least invite Corey to "a fish dinner at Taft's"; whereupon his wife's contempt knew no bounds. That night the Colonel failed to rest well; he failed to appear at the office next day, and young Corey came down to Nantasket to inquire about his health. Mrs. Lapham insisted on her husband's not showing him-

self in his dressing-gown, and when the visitor met the vanquished Colonel indoors the latter was still buttoning up his double-breasted frock-coat. But a courteous call of inquiry after one's health was not the usual thing in Lapham's circle, and surprise was mingled with gratification at the young man's polite solicitude. Corey's repeated visits began to make Mrs. Lapham feel that in some way they were taking advantage of his family's absence from the city; but the Colonel remarked that the young man was of age, and indignantly declared, "To hear you talk, you'd think those Coreys were too good for this world, and we wa'n't fit for 'em to walk on." As his indignation grew his language became more emphatic: "Once for all, now, don't you ever let me hear you say anything like that again! I'm worth nigh on to a million, and I've made it every cent myself; and my girls are the equals of anybody, I don't care who it is." Thus, here and there, the pride of his honest manhood mingles with the pride of his self-created success, despite his sense of social deficiency.

The Corey invitation to dinner naturally created in the Lapham family something of a sensation. In the formal note of invitation, Mrs. Corey had spoken of "General" Lapham, and the Colonel's comment at supper had a touch of his characteristic humor in it: "I didn't know I was a general. I guess I shall have to be looking up my back pay." In accepting the invitation, Mrs. Lapham, who had no special sense "of the awful and binding nature of a dinner invitation," made no mention of the fact that her elder daughter Penelope had refused to go, and in the hope that her daughter might relent, cherished the easy belief that her absence might be readily excused after the Laphams' arrival at the

dinner party. In her note of acceptance Mrs. Lapham, after long hesitation between her husband's given name and her own, signed herself, "Yours truly, Mrs. S. Lapham."

What to wear at a formal dinner party was the next momentous question to harass the breasts of the Lapham family. The wife and mother anxiously remarked, "*I* don't know what to wear; or the girls either. I do wonder — I've heard that people go to dinner in low necks. Do you suppose it's the custom?"

"How should *I* know?" demanded the Colonel. "I guess you've got clothes enough. Any rate, you needn't fret about it. You just go round to White's or Jordan & Marsh's, and ask for a dinner dress. I guess that'll settle it; they'll know. Get some of them imported dresses. I see 'em in the window every time I pass, lots of 'em."

The Colonel's bravery of attitude began soon, however, to weaken under all the dress-making effort and discussion in the house, and vague apprehensions in regard to his own clothes hovered in the background of his imagination. "An ideal of the figure in which he should go presented itself to his mind. He should not wear any dress-coat, because, for one thing, he considered that a man looked like a fool in a dress-coat, and, for another thing, he had none — had none on principle. He would go in a frock-coat and black pantaloons, and perhaps a white waistcoat, but a black cravat anyway." But this ideal was too much for the rest of the family, and particularly his daughter Irene, who recalled how a few years before he had been the only person without a dress-coat at a corps reunion dinner. And she remembered her awful feeling about it at the time. Even his wife, who would ordinarily have

admired his independent attitude, shook her head, and remarked apprehensively, "I don't see but what you'll have to get you one, Si. I don't believe they *ever* go without 'em to a private house."

Openly confident, he nevertheless, on the next day, "cast anchor before his tailor's door and got measured for a dress-coat." Next he was torn with doubt as to his waistcoat, but, buying a book of etiquette for the purpose, he found that it decided against white waistcoats. He began, also, to waver on black cravats, and on the critical subject of gloves the book of etiquette also said nothing. Drops of perspiration gathered on the Colonel's forehead in the strenuousness of this inner debate; he groaned, and even swore a little in the "compromise profanity" that was peculiar to him. His ironical daughter Penelope naïvely asked why he didn't go to Jordan & Marsh's and order one of the imported dresses for himself. This gave them all the relief of a laugh, but it was a painful laugh for the Colonel. The Colonel devised in his own mind how, by an incidental question to young Corey in the office, he might find out all about dinner gloves, but his provincial pride kept him from even a mention of the prospective dinner. However, he finally bought a pair, and on the night of the dinner, as he stood on the landing of the Corey staircase waiting for his wife and daughter to come down, his saffron-tinted gloves (the tint had been recommended by the shop-girl) on his large fists made them look suggestively "like canvassed hams." "He stood staring at his hands, now open and now shut, and breathing hard." Suddenly young Tom Corey appeared, and when the Colonel discovered that his host's son wore no gloves, he began with an assumed indifference to pull off his own.

Mrs. Lapham had decided against low necks, and had "intrenched herself in the safety of a black silk," while Irene, her daughter, "trailed a delicate splendor across the carpet in her mother's wake." Lapham himself, thanking God that he should have been spared the shame of wearing gloves where no one else did, yet at the same time depressed that Corey should have seen him in them, had "an unwonted aspect of almost pathetic refinement."

Addressing herself to Mr. Lapham, the hostess, Mrs. Corey, called him "General" Lapham; the honest man modestly protested, "No, ma'am, only Colonel," but the correction was lost upon his hostess. When he failed to get clearly the name of the person to whom he was introduced, he held the person's hand, and leaning sympathetically forward, inquired, "What name?" — a social method he was quite sure was right because it had been used with himself by some great man to whom he had been introduced on a public platform. When the hostess, being under the impression apparently that the elder Lapham daughter was still in the dressing-room, asked if she could send any one to be of assistance to her, Mrs. Lapham, turning fire-red, bluntly said in her embarrassment, "She isn't upstairs. She didn't feel just like coming to-night. I don't know as she's feeling very well." Mrs. Corey, the hostess, "emitted a very small 'O!' — very small, very cold, — which began to grow larger and hotter and to burn into Mrs. Lapham's soul" before Mrs. Corey, the lady, expressed her regret, and her hope that there was nothing serious.

In their determination not to be the first at the dinner party, Mrs. Lapham perceived they had really been the last to arrive and must have kept the other guests waiting.

The hostess slipped her hand through the Colonel's arm, and they passed out to dinner last of all, though why the Colonel did not know. As he sank into his seat, a long sigh of relief came from Mr. Lapham, for he now felt sure if he only watched the others he could keep himself safe from blunder. The hostess's cousin, James Bellingham, had a little mannerism of tucking the corner of his napkin into his collar, and thereupon the Colonel followed suit; but seeing that no one but Bellingham did so, he became doubtful and slyly pulled it out. On principle the Colonel was a prohibitionist, and he apprehensively fingered the wine-glasses in his effort to decide whether to turn them all down, as he had once seen a well-known politician do. But it seemed a rather conspicuous thing to do, and so he let the servant fill them all, and drank from each so as not to appear peculiar. He was not at all sure that he ought not to decline some of the dishes or at least leave most of some of them on his plate. However, in his dilemma he took everything and ate everything.

The Colonel noted with satisfaction that his wife seemed to be holding her own with Mr. Corey, the host, and he himself was getting on famously with the hostess, who had the intuition to introduce the subject of his new house. But in the general conversation about the creative side of architecture, social settlement work, and the function of the modern novel, the Colonel despairingly lost his bearings; and whenever something appropriate to what they were saying came into his mind he was unable to get it out before they were off on something else; "they jumped about so, he could not keep up," and he had a general uneasy feeling that he was not doing himself justice. Being thirsty, and not liking to ask for more water, he freely drank the

wine, and it was beginning to have its effect on his unaccustomed brain.

When the ladies withdrew to the other room and the Colonel sat with the gentlemen, he felt more at home with the fuming cigar between his lips. He turned sidewise in his chair, intertwined the fingers of both hands, and smoked "at large ease." References were made to the carnage of a particular battle of the Civil War in which the Colonel had been engaged as a member of a Vermont regiment, and it was evidently expected that he would have something interesting to say in the way of reminiscence; but all he was able to get out was a slight confirmatory remark. Now and then the haze that seemed to envelop his mind would clear away, and allow him some brief significant word that naturally called for more; and finally he was able to tell them a little story about a fellow in his own company that sacrificed his life for the Colonel's. The story was effective enough, as told in the Colonel's simple, vivid way, to make an impression. The Colonel felt it and was going to deepen that impression, when another glass of wine seemed suddenly to make his brain a blank, and the host came to the rescue with, "Shall we join the ladies?"

The Colonel noticed that his daughter Irene was looking beautiful, but not talking much, and under the exhilarating influence of the wine he now perceived that a dinner party was the place to talk. He had, in fact, a certain consciousness of having talked very well himself; he now carried an air of great dignity, and assumed a grave and weighty deliberateness. He was invited into the library, where he, of course, had to give his ideas on books, remarking, as he did so, that newspapers were

about all he could find time for. He thanked Bromfield Corey for his son's suggestion of books for his new library, and he also announced that he was going to have pictures. He even asked Mr. Corey "who was about the best American painter going now." He rapidly grew boastful, under the relaxing effect of the wine, and naturally swung off from pictures to his own mineral paint. He offered to have Mr. Corey run up with him to the Works, where he could also show him some of the finest Jersey grades in the country; he told about his brother William, the judge in Dubuque, and a farm out there of his own that paid for itself every year in wheat. Losing all fear, he lifted his voice and hammered the chair by way of emphasis. Bromfield Corey seemed impressed, and the other gentlemen would stop now and then to look at the Colonel; so that the latter was surprised himself by his ease among men whose names he had previously stood in awe of. He grew familiar, and called his host by his surname alone; and noticing young Corey, the Colonel took occasion to tell the company how he had once said to his wife that he could make a man of him if he had him in the business. In fact, the Colonel soon had all the talk to himself, and he talked unceasingly, feeling, as he did so, that it was all a great social triumph.

Word came that Mrs. Lapham was going, but he refused to hurry; he cordially invited each of the gentlemen present to drop in and see him at his office, and made them promise to do so; and he genially remarked to James Bellingham that it had always been his ambition to know him, and that if any one had said, when he first came to Boston, that in ten years he should be hobnobbing with Jim Bellingham, he should have told that person he lied.

He would also have told anybody he lied that had told him, ten years ago, that a son of Bromfield Corey would come and ask him to take him into the business. And thus the man's real secret feeling of immense gratification over his present social privilege came vulgarly and pitifully to the surface.

The Colonel even specified the amount of his fortune and how many thousand dollars he had just loaned his former partner; with "patronizing affection" he took leave of the minister, telling him to come around if he got into "a tight place" with his parish work; and turning to his host, Bromfield Corey, he jocularly remarked, "Why, when your wife sent to mine last fall, I drew a check for five hundred dollars, but my wife wouldn't take more than one hundred; said she wasn't going to show off before Mrs. Corey. I call that a pretty good joke on Mrs. Corey. I must tell her how Mrs. Lapham done her out of a cool four hundred dollars." And then he went away without saying good night to his hostess! "In the cold gray light of the [next] morning the glories of the night before showed poorer. Here and there a painful doubt obtruded itself and marred them with its awkward shadow." And in his office that morning he turned to Tom Corey, son of his host, and demanded, "Was I drunk last night?"

The abject self-abasement of his employer, Colonel Lapham, in the presence of young Corey, as if he were suddenly made aware of an intrinsic social inferiority that was hopeless; the agony of his discovery that the young man had really been loving his oldest daughter Penelope, instead of the beautiful but somewhat insipid Irene, through whom the ambitious Colonel and his wife had

ardently hoped for a social alliance with the aristocratic Coreys; and the Colonel's appeal in his helpless misery to the minister, Mr. Sewell, whom he met at the Corey dinner, — are moving and dramatic phases in the development of this crude, strong provincial type that is suddenly called upon to face strange conditions and new forces in its widening life. His almost inarticulate sympathy with the stolid suffering of Irene, and his steadfast sense of justice to the other daughter who had been the innocent cause of this suffering, illustrate the depth of love and the spirit of fairness inherent in Lapham's nature.

In his effort to deal generously with his old partner, Rogers, — whom he had forced out of the paint business at a time when its future was assured, — Lapham had, as he phrased it, been throwing good money after bad; and for the sake of his wife, who was particularly sensitive as to the Colonel's former treatment of his partner, Lapham had gone deeper into Rogers's financial schemes than he really wanted to or judged was best. He casually but meaningly remarked to his wife in connection with the matter that "pretty near everybody but the fellows that owe *me* seem to expect me to do a cash business, all of a sudden." His wife's question of alarm brought out his reassurance that it was all right. "I ain't going to let the grass grow under my feet, though, — especially while Rogers digs the ground away from the roots." "If it has to come to that, I'm going to squeeze him." The Colonel's face lighted up with the joy of expected revenge. "Milton K. Rogers is a rascal, if you want to know. . . . But I guess he'll find he's got his come-uppance." And then the Colonel proceeded to tell his wife how Rogers, by dabbling in wildcat stocks, patent-rights, land speculations,

and oil claims, had "run through about everything," and how with a certain big mill property he should have gotten rich. "But you can't make Milton K. Rogers rich, any more than you can fat a hide-bound colt. It ain't in him. He'd run through Vanderbilt, Jay Gould, and Tom Scott rolled into one in less than six months, give him a chance, and come out and want to borrow money of you." The Colonel's vow was thereupon registered never to let this Rogers borrow from him again.

In his effort to get back what he had already loaned Rogers, Lapham had become more deeply implicated, and in his confession to his wife he made a clean breast of it. She, recalling how she had urged her husband to make restitution to his old partner for having forced him out of the paint business, fixed the blame entirely upon herself. "She came back to this, with her helpless longing, inbred in all Puritan souls, to have some one specifically suffer for the evil in the world, even if it must be herself."

But when the opportunity presented itself of getting rid of the mill property that had fallen into Lapham's hands as security in his dealing with Rogers, Lapham's robust but tempted honesty and sense of fair play proved so strong that it stood in the way of his own financial recovery. And this rugged virtue of exact honesty and characteristic sense of fair play were confirmed, though sadly, by his sympathetic and courageous wife. Her pride in him was one of his strongest props in the strain of great emergencies. She was willing to fall with him, so long as in that fall their honor and honesty were retained. Yet she tried to be optimistic for his sake: "I don't suppose but what there's plenty would help you if they knew you

needed it, Si." But the husband sardonically replied: "They would if they knew I *didn't* need it."

The fluctuations in Lapham's affairs told upon his face and temper, — he grew old and thin and irascible, and his wife and daughter Penelope had to endure in the home the silence or the petulance of the gloomy, secret man. His troubles thickened when he was least able to bear them, — he was obliged to shut down the Works at Lapham, where the fire had never been out since it was first kindled, a fact he had always bragged about as "the last expression of his sense of success"; a new and equally good West Virginia paint, which could be produced by a cheaper fuel, had come into the market, already overstocked, with a competition that could not be met; the suddenly roused jealousy of his wife — though in fact due to a misinterpretation of his unselfish charity toward a drunken widow and her daughter — for a time isolated him from her helpful sympathy; and, last of all, he was compelled to make up his mind to sell his new house, which had stood for so much in his hopes and ideals. Yet the Colonel's depression was often alternated with the spirit of optimism, when by some vague imagination it seemed to him that all things would in some miraculous way be made right. "The process of Lapham's financial disintegration was like the course of some chronic disorder which has fastened itself upon the constitution, but advances with continual reliefs, with apparent amelioration, and at times seems not to advance at all, when it gives hope of final recovery not only to the sufferer but to the eye of science." Lapham's adversity was not always like "the adversity we figure in allegory; it had its moments of being like

prosperity, and if upon the whole it was continual, it was not incessant."

In shrinking from the making of an assignment because of its publicity, he even determined, as already suggested, upon the sale of his new house "on the water side of Beacon Street." But his pride would not allow the property to be described or his own name given by the broker unless "parties meant business." In fact, there did come a specific offer from some one who had seen the house in the fall to pay for it what it had cost up to that time. But so much of his hope for himself and his children had gone into the house that the thought of selling it made him tremulous and sick. With his nerves shaken by want of sleep and the shock of this sudden question of sale, Lapham left his office early and went at sunset to look at his house and come to some conclusion. The very street lamps, as they flared down the beautiful perspective toward the sunset, seemed to Silas not merely a part of the landscape, but "a part of his pride and glory, his success, his triumphant life's work, which was fading into failure in his helpless hands." He looked up and recalled how he and his daughter Irene had stood one night before the house and she had said that she should never live there. There was no such façade on the street, he thought; the whole design "appealed to him as an exquisite bit of harmony appeals to the unlearned ear." He went up into the music room, and the whim seized him to test the chimney by a fire in the grate. He watched the burning shavings and blocks as he sat on a nail-keg and noted the chimney's success, and the proud resolution came to him never to sell the house so long as he had a dollar. Having optimistically smoked his cigar, he stamped upon

the embers still aglow and went home with a buoyant heart.

But alas! for human hopes; as he and his daughter Penelope, after the theater that night, walked around to see the new house by starlight, what should be lighting up the sky with its lurid flames but the burning house of Silas Lapham! "I guess I done it, Pen," was all he said; and as Penelope drew her father away toward the nearest carriage, they caught the humorous remark: "He ought to have had a coat of his non-combustible paint on it." When he had reached home and his wife falteringly intimated that people would think he had set fire to the house to get the insurance, Lapham pathetically set her mind at rest by his answer: "I had a builder's risk on it, but it expired last week. It's a dead loss." "Oh, thank the merciful Lord!" cried his wife. "Merciful!" said Lapham. "Well, it's a queer way of showing it." And the sleep that he sank into that night might be called a torpor rather than a sleep. The next morning he wished for a moment that he never had wakened.

Though sorely tempted by the offer of his former partner and of English agents to take his mill property at a good price, — especially since it would mean his own financial salvation, — the Colonel sturdily held to his original point of view that the first condition of sale was to be a complete explanation of the circumstances surrounding the property — namely, that the Great Lacustrine & Polar Railroad, on which the mills were dependent, would probably want the mills, and if it did, what it was willing to pay would fix the ultimate value of the property. To come to this conclusion against the subtle wiles of Rogers, his old partner, required an all-night struggle with

his conscience, and even without his wife's usual help, but he was victorious in the end, even to his own undoing. And likewise, when he had an opportunity to sell an interest in his paint works at Lapham to a willing purchaser, he had lost his chance and all it would have meant to him at that crisis in his affairs by conscientiously telling of the existence of the competing company in West Virginia, and its facilities for cheaper production.

Finally, after desperate efforts to save himself, and with spasmodic hopes that he would succeed, the gradual process of his ruin brought him to the actual consummation of bankruptcy. And all concerned in his affairs said that he behaved well, — there was a return to him of his earlier prudence and good sense which he seemed temporarily to have lost in his too abundant prosperity; he saw the futility of further operations in Boston; he put the house at Nankeen Square, with everything he had, into the payment of his debts; and recognized heroically that back in the Vermont hills where he began was the place where he should have to begin again, although the going back was as much the end to him of his proud, prosperous life as death itself could have been.

In truth, life had lost most of its buoyant quality for him, and even the long-hoped-for alliance with the aristocratic Coreys, through the marriage of Penelope Lapham with young Corey, failed to bring that sense of gratified social ambition which would once have been so keen a delight. Both the Colonel and his wife took a good deal of satisfaction in his clean-handedness through the whole process of his business collapse; and when Mr. Sewell and his wife, the next summer after Lapham had sold out, stopped to see him on their way from the White Mountains

to Lake Champlain, he gave the minister his own interpretation of the workings of his life, a sort of rude doctrine about the inescapable influence of evil action: "Sometimes I get to thinking it all over, and it seems to me I done wrong about Rogers in the first place; that the whole trouble came from that. It was just like starting a row of bricks. I tried to catch up and stop 'em from going, but they all tumbled, one after another. It wa'n't in the nature of things that they could be stopped till the last brick went."

And when the minister delicately inquired if Lapham ever had any regrets, the Colonel characteristically replied: "About what I done? Well, it don't always seem as if I done it. Seems sometimes as if it was a hole opened for me, and I crept out of it. . . . I don't know as I should always say it paid; but if I done it, and the thing was to do over again, right in the same way, I guess I should have to do it."

This, at the end, is really an essential note in the convincing portrayal of a self-made Yankee type, — strong, yet crude; ambitious, yet ludicrously provincial at times; full of an unostentatious philanthropy and a grateful loyalty; driven with energy, yet kindly and shrewdly humorous; proud and boastful of its own creation, yet almost groveling at times in its effort to accomplish its social advancement; virile and normal in its ordinary manifestations, but often coarsely vulgar in its pleasures, and ignorant of the delightful worlds of art and literary enjoyment; and religiously conscientious in its steadfast honesty, even when that honesty meant the cruel blasting of every hope and achievement.

CHAPTER III

"PEMBROKE" BY MARY E. WILKINS

When the New England short story is mentioned the mind naturally turns to Miss Wilkins (now Mary Wilkins Freeman), because of her certain touch in portraying the various provincial types in that special form of literary art. But in her more sustained effort of "Pembroke" one gets more fully the interaction of many village types and a deeper impression of the prevailing grimness and rigidity of much of New England's remote community life, — a life that has, too, its pleasing contrasts, its often unconscious humor, and its strength of loyal love and self-sacrifice; yet as painted by Miss Wilkins it is gaunt and "set," intensely and formally religious, and lacking much in the spirit of mirth and the love of beauty. As has elsewhere been said, conscience and will dominate these lives like passions, — they are driven before them like ships with bare masts before the storm. Life often ceases to be joy and becomes only duty, — duty of the most exacting and unrelenting kind; or else some cruel stubbornness or inactivity of will works itself out almost unconsciously into a lifelong tragedy of suffering and misery.

Miss Wilkins's opening picture in "Pembroke" is that of the Thayer family sitting in semicircle about the kitchen fire, the great leather-bound Bible resting on the knees of Caleb Thayer, the father, who is reading from it in solemn

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voice; while his wife, Deborah, "her large face tilted with a judicial and argumentative air," sits straight in her chair and enjoys with much relish one of the imprecatory psalms her husband is reading. Her eyes were gleaming with warlike energy, — she was confusing "King David's enemies with those people who crossed her own will." As her eldest son, Barney, came into the kitchen on his way to make a Sunday-night call on his sweetheart, Ephraim, the younger son, stared at his brother's smooth, scented hair, the black satin vest with a pattern of blue flowers on it, the blue coat with brass buttons, and the shining boots, and softly whistled under his breath.

Mrs. Thayer enjoined her son not to stay later than nine o'clock, and to emphasize her injunction "she jerked her chin down heavily as if it were made of iron." But Barnabas, a chip of the maternal block, slammed the door as he went out, and the mother remarked that if he were a few years younger, she would make him shut that door "over again." "Barney" was to be married to Charlotte Barnard in June; and as he passed under the apple blossoms and looked up, he thought of his share of the income from apples, and how Charlotte after their marriage should have one new silk dress every year and two new bonnets, — for his mother had often noted with scorn that Charlotte wore her summer bonnet with another ribbon on it in winter. In his loving pride he had once bought Charlotte a little blue-figured shawl, which her father in the answering pride of poverty had bidden her return. "I ain't goin' to have any young sparks buyin' your clothes while you are under my roof."

On his way to Charlotte Barnard's he stopped at the little story-and-a-half cottage house which he had been building in anticipation of his marriage. His father, in his inherited

terror of wind, had urged the safety of a one-story house, but Barney scornfully insisted on a story and a half. Through the kitchen window he could see a straight, dark column of smoke rising from Charlotte's home. He imagined how pleased she would be with the sunniness of the windows in this cozy room, and said to himself, "Her rocking-chair can set there." In the fullness of his emotion at the thought of their happiness the tears came to his eyes, and, laying his cheek against a partition wall of his new house, he suddenly kissed it. As he went out of the house, he thought of their long future together and the solemn end, — "I shall lie in my coffin in the north room, and it will be all over," — but his heart was leaping with joy and he felt the proud strength of a soldier.

In the Barnard kitchen, after a somewhat nervous welcome to the lover on the part of Charlotte's mother and Aunt Sylvia, the sudden and gruff voice of Cephas Barnard, the father, bade his daughter light the candle, although it was hardly late enough to justify such a proceeding. But the grim, black-eyed Cephas suspected that the young lover would be likely to hold his daughter's hand in the dusk, and he was going to prevent it.

Barnabas listened for the welcome crackle of the fire in the parlor where he hoped to sit alone with Charlotte, but this particular Sunday night he failed to hear it. With aggressive opposition Charlotte's father had sometimes proclaimed, "If Barnabas Thayer can't set here with the rest of us, he can go home." His hard and at times almost savage manner was loyally interpreted by Mrs. Barnard to her daughter as "your father's way." As Miss Wilkins remarks, "Miss Barnard herself had spelt out her husband like a hard and seemingly cruel text in the Bible. She

marveled at its darkness in her light, but she believed in it reverently, and even pugnaciously." But her elder sister Hannah stood in no particular awe of her brother-in-law, and his autocratic whims she was quick to characterize in a somewhat pungent style: "His way! Keepin' you all on rye meal one spell, an' not lettin' you eat a mite of Injun, an' then keepin' you on Injun without a mite of rye! Makin' you eat nothin' but greens an' garden stuff, an' jest turnin' you out to graze an' chew your cuds like horned animals one spell, an' then makin' you live on meat!"

Tragically enough, on this eventful night Cephas Barnard and his prospective son-in-law, — the one a Whig and the other a Democrat, — fell into an ugly political discussion, which waxed uglier, until in his sudden rage the father ordered Barnabas from the house. "Get out of this house, an' don't you ever darse darken these doors again while the Lord Almighty reigns!" Whereupon, in an awful voice, Barnabas rejoined, "I never will, by the Lord Almighty!" and slammed the door behind him. That quarrel and that vow, in the grimly ordered village tragedy of Miss Wilkins, affected the life of a whole community. Given the "set" New England character and the idolatry of self-will, and some very tragic consequences may result from seemingly trivial causes.

Against her father's will and even forcibly, Charlotte pushed out into the night calling after her lover to come back, but with characteristic stubbornness he never turned his head; and there she stood alone, finally shouting to him imperiously, "If you're ever coming back, you come now!" Locked out from her home by her angry father, Charlotte sat motionless on the door-stone till her Aunt Sylvia's appearance suggested that she spend the night with her. And as

they went by, all unknown to them, Barnabas Thayer, the maddened lover, watched them from the window of his new house, and bewailed the hardness of his fate, which he inevitably connected with the will of God. "'What have I done to be treated in this way?' he demanded, setting his face ahead in the darkness; and he did not see Cephas Barnard's threatening countenance, but another, gigantic with its vague outlines, which his fancy could not limit, confronting him with terrible negative power like a stone image. He struck out against it, and the blows fell back on his own heart."

Involved in the misery of Charlotte and Barnabas, is the sweet and lifelike "old maid," Aunt Sylvia Crane, who, detained by the quarrel of Cephas and Barnabas, had missed at her own home the regular Sunday-night call of Richard Alger, her quasi-lover for the past eighteen years. The previous Sunday night he had come so perilously near to "popping the question" that he had managed to move over from his chair to the haircloth sofa on which she expectantly sat; he had actually begun a sort of declaration of love when the clock struck ten and startled him into a sense of the lateness of the hour, putting a sudden end to his long-delayed and long-hoped-for proposal. And so through the following week Sylvia Crane had trembled and sighed and yearned for the next Sunday night, when, perhaps, Richard would end his long wooing and add the crown of happiness to her patient life. But alas! when he did actually come he found the stone which the Crane family from time immemorial had rolled before the front door in their absence blocking the way, and he abruptly returned to his home. That night, while her niece, Charlotte Barnard, lay sobbing upstairs and muttering to herself, "Poor Barney! Poor Barney!" her Aunt Sylvia, below, kept repeating piteously: "Poor Rich-

ard! Poor Richard!" And the next morning, after a long night of restless grief, the old maid felt that the disappointment of her niece was as nothing in comparison with the sorrow of her own maturity. "I guess she ain't had any such night as I have. Girls don't know much about it." The hopelessness of her sorrow took the surprising form of petulance and hostile criticism, and the naturally sweet-tempered woman even dared to strike at the willful eccentricities of her brother-in-law. She maintained with remarkable audacity that Barney was no more "set" than Cephas; and when her sister defended her husband, with the remark, "Cephas ain't set. It's jest his way," Sylvia grew strangely ironical: "Folks had better been created without ways, then. . . . They'd been enough sight happier an' better off, and so would other folks that they have to do with, than to have so many ways, an' not sense enough to manage them." Sylvia even went so far in her sudden reaction against fate as to inveigh against the doctrine of free will, which naturally had a horrifying effect on her other sister, the strong-willed, churchly, and dominating Hannah Berry. "Sylvy Crane, you ain't goin' to deny one of the doctrines of the Church, at your time of life?" And being bravely answered by Sylvia in the affirmative, Mrs. Berry exclaimed: "Then all I've got to say is you'd ought to be ashamed of yourself. Why, I should think you was crazy, Sylvy Crane, settin' up yourself agin' the doctrines of the Word."

The garrulous and outspoken Hannah was not lacking either in criticism of her brother-in-law; but his wife Sarah came to his defense, recalling his morning's talk on food. "He said this mornin' that he didn't know but we were eatin' the wrong kind of food. Lately he's had an idea that mebbe we'd ought to eat more meat; he's thought it was

more strengthenin', an' we'd ought to eat things as near like what we wanted to strengthen as could be. I've made a good deal of bone soup. But now he says he thinks mebbe he's been mistaken, an' animal food kind of quickens the animal nature in us, an' that we'd better eat green things an' garden sass." To which the sarcastic Hannah, with a sniff, retorted: "I guess garden sass will strengthen the other kind of sass that Cephas Barnard has got in him, full as much as bone soup has." When later Cephas came over and marched back, with his wife and daughter following close behind, Hannah Berry's parting comment was: "Well, all I've got to say is I'm thankful I ain't got a man like that, an' you ought to be mighty thankful you ain't got any man at all, Sylvy Crane." But poor Sylvia could hardly agree.

When, at home, Charlotte had put off her purple gown, which was to have been a part of the wedding wardrobe, and clad in a common dress, descended to the kitchen, she found her mother facing her father with unwonted spirit. She was remonstrating with him for his latest whim, — he had turned vegetarian with such a vengeance that he was insisting on sorrel pies, and he wanted them made without lard. His wife argued the impossibility of such cookery, although she made the confession that "Mebbe the sorrel, if it had some molasses on it for juice, wouldn't taste very bad." When both wife and daughter leagued against him in the matter of such pastry, Cephas came out of the pantry carrying the mixing-board and rolling-pin "like a shield and a club," and set to work himself with characteristic stubbornness. His wife softly intimated that she had some pumpkin that would make good pies, but the perverse vegetarian said he knew that pumpkin pies had milk in them, "An' I tell you I ain't goin' to have anything of an animal nature in

'em." To his wife's observation that she had seen horses "terribly ugly, an' they don't eat a mite of meat," Cephas crushingly replied: "Ain't I told ye once horses were the exceptions. There has to be exceptions. If there wa'n't any exceptions there couldn't be any rule, an' there bein' exceptions shows there is a rule. Women can't ever get hold of things straight. Their minds slant off sideways, the way their arms do when they fling a stone."

In the midst of his pie-making that she-Puritan, Deborah Thayer, abruptly entered. "She moved, a stately, high-hipped figure, her severe face almost concealed in a scooping, green, barege hood, to the center of the floor, and stood there with a pose that might have answered for a statue of Judgment." She came to see what her son Barnabas, the night before, had done that Cephas Barnard should order him from the house forever. "If it's anything wrong, I shall be jest as hard on him as the Lord for it." Charlotte's exclamation that Barney had done nothing wrong was simply ignored by his mother, who fiercely assailed Cephas for the reason. Cephas, grimly silent, at last opened his mouth as if perforce, declaring that they "got to talkin' about the 'lection," and that, according to his own reasoning, what they ate had a good deal to do with it. "I think if you'd kept your family on less meat, and given 'em more garden-stuff to eat, Barney wouldn't have been so up an' comin'. It's what he's eat that's made him what he is." This was too much for the logical theories of Deborah Thayer, and she gazed at Cephas in stern amazement. "You're tryin' to make out, as near as I can tell, that whatever my son has done wrong is due to what he's eat, and not to original sin. I knew you had queer ideas, Cephas Barnard, but I didn't know you wa'n't sound in your faith."

Suddenly Charlotte leaped up in fierce resentment against the injustice of her father, and in loyal defense of her lover, laying the blame for the quarrel largely on the former. And as Deborah Thayer retired, after discovering the sorrel pies, she remarked, with fierce conscientiousness: "I'm goin' to try to make my son do his duty. I don't expect he will, but I shall do all I can, tempers or no tempers, and sorrel pies or no sorrel pies."

Mrs. Thayer's daughter Rebecca, in company with Rose Berry, her cousin, — after the latter's somewhat self-interested effort to reconcile Barney and Charlotte, — makes a charming picture in Silas Berry's great country store, as she stands waiting to sell her basket of eggs, her face blooming "deeply pink in the green tunnel of her sunbonnet," her black eyes as "soft and wary as a baby's," her full red lips wearing a grave, innocent expression. She is standing before her lover, Silas Berry's son William, who is ardently eager to give her a generous allowance of sugar for her eggs, if only he can escape the watchful supervision of his penurious father in the rear of the store. The old man's hard voice sounds out, "You ain't offerin' of her two pound of sugar for two dozen eggs?" And when the son replies that it was two and a half pounds, Silas excitedly cries out, "Be you gone crazy?" Despite his daughter's petition and his son's resolute determination to give the modest Rebecca a full exchange, old Silas pulled himself up "a joint at a time," came forward at a stiff halt, and said: "Sugar is fourteen cents a pound, an' eggs is fetchin' ten cents a dozen; you can have a pound and a half of sugar for them eggs if you can give me a cent to boot." Poor Rebecca colored, and replied that she hadn't brought her purse, whereupon the old man enjoined her to tell her mother about it and come

back with the cent by and by. But this mean bargaining was too much for the young lover, William, who shouldered his father to one side with sudden energy, sternly whispering to him to "leave it alone." However, the old man's chronic "closeness" reasserted itself in the expostulating remark: "I ain't goin' to stan' by an' see you givin' twice as much for eggs as they're worth, 'cause it's a gal you're tradin' with. That wa'n't never my way of doin' business, an' I ain't goin' to have it done in my store." William, with steady resolution, recklessly heaped the sugar on some paper, and laid it on the steelyards; the old man pushed forward and bent over the steelyards, wrathfully exclaiming, "You've weighed out nigh three." Suddenly something in the son's face made the old man stop, — the combination of mental and superior physical force in the son dominated the father. "His son towered over him in what seemed the might of his own lost strength and youth, brandishing his own old weapons." Yet nature reasserted itself, for when William had put the sugar in Rebecca's basket, the old man began counting the eggs, only to find that "there ain't but twenty-three eggs here." Under the fierce whisperings of William, however, Silas finally subsided into sullen mutterings.

Rebecca's arrival at home found her mother, Deborah Thayer, vigorously making cake, looking as "full of stern desperation as a soldier on the battlefield. Deborah never yielded to any of the vicissitudes of life; she met them in fair fight like enemies, and vanquished them, not with trumpet and spear, but with daily duties. It was a village story how Deborah Thayer "cleaned all the windows in the house one afternoon when her first child had died in the morning." She was now making cake in the midst of her bitter misery

over her son's quarrel with Cephas Barnard and his sweetheart Charlotte. She insisted on Rebecca's staying in the kitchen to cream the butter and sugar, and she already had her younger and somewhat invalid son, Ephraim, stoning raisins. Though forbidden to eat any, Ephraim would fill his mouth when his mother turned away to watch Barney, the older son, at work in the field. Ephraim's mouth was " demure with mischief," and his " gawky figure perpetually uneasy and twisting, as if to find entrance into small forbidden places." When his mother looked suddenly at him there was a curious expression in his face that continually led his mother to infer that he had been transgressing, and she would cry out sharply, " What have you been doin', Ephraim ? " but she was always routed by Ephraim's " innocent, wondering grin in response." At the end of his raisin-stoning he plaintively asked, " Can't I have just one raisin, mother ? " " Yes, you may, if you ain't eat any while you was pickin' of 'em over." Whereupon little innocent Ephraim selected a large fat " plum," and ate it with " ostentatious relish."

As his mother turned to go out, Ephraim whiningly asked if he couldn't go too. " There were times when the spirit of rebellion in him made illness and even his final demise flash before his eyes like sweet overhanging fruit, since they were so strenuously forbidden." Meeting her son Barnabas, who was plowing in the field, Deborah issued her ultimatum, and their first silent glances were as if " two wills clashed swords in advance." " I ain't never goin' to say anything more to you about it," referring to the proposed apology to Cephas Barnard, " but there's one thing — you needn't come home to dinner. You sha'n't ever sit down to a meal in your father's and mother's house whilst this thing goes on." And the only response that came from the " set " Barnabas was

"G'lang!" Caleb, the father, also pleaded with the son, but without the least effect; and as he sat sobbing under the wild cherry tree, — his face in his old red handkerchief, — Rebecca, coming out to feed the hens, attempted to console him with the remark, "Barney'll get over it." To which Caleb despairingly responded: "No, he won't; no, he won't. He's jest like your mother."

One of the delightful and relieving pictures in "Pembroke" is that of the cherry party in Silas Berry's orchard — where the young people of the village were in the habit of picnicking, until old Silas's greed overreached itself and some college friends of 'Squire Payne's son, refusing to pay the exorbitant price, went by singing "Who lives here?" with the mocking response, "Old Silas Berry, who charges sixpence for a cherry." The comment of his wife on the impolicy of his greed, — "You're jest a-puttin' your own eyes out, Silas Berry," — proved too true a prophecy, for his orchard was regularly boycotted by the young people and purchasers generally. This season, however, the old man seemed afflicted with spasmodic generosity, — he had even offered Rose, his daughter, the privilege of a cherry party without pay; whereat Rose fairly gasped. "The vague horror of the unusual stole over her. A new phase of her father's character stood between her and all her old memories like a supernatural presence." As she said to her mother, she was dreadfully afraid he was going to have another "shock."

In making the plans for the party Rose and her mother decided to include all the available young people, — "The Lord only knows when your father'll have another freak like this. I guess it's like an eclipse of the sun, and won't come again very soon." And there was Charlotte Barnard, her "smooth hair gleaming in the sun, her neck showing pink

through her embroidered lace kerchief," apparently not seeing her old lover, Barnabas, but knowing full well when he came; and Barney, in his best suit, slender and handsome, with a stern and almost martial air, standing apart, and feeling a fierce sense of ownership in Charlotte, whose basket the 'Squire's son Thomas was filling with the ripest cherries from the top of the tree. But Barney yielded to the charm of Rose Berry's frank and winning ways, — of Rose, who, in the heart of her New England, and bred after the precepts of orthodoxy, was yet a pagan, and "worshiped Love himself." "Barney was simply the statue that represented the divinity; another might have done as well had the sculpture been as fine."

"Copenhagen" was the favorite game that afternoon under the cherry trees; and as the young people clung to the swaying rope, looping this way and that as the pursuers neared them, their radiant faces "had the likeness of one family of flowers, through their one expression." The tossing cherry boughs above their heads, the old red tavern wall with a great mass of blooming phlox against it, "vague with distance like a purple smoke," the glistening fence rails, a singing bluebird, — these were all unthought of by the merrymakers, and only one note, the note of joyous love, they listened to; even Charlotte and Barney felt the old touch of love's exhilaration, except that it was Rose and not Charlotte that Barney kissed so fiercely, for at that very moment the handsome face of Thomas Payne, his rival, was meeting Charlotte's. "The girls' cheeks flushed deeper, their smooth locks became roughened. The laughter waxed louder and longer; the matrons looking on doubled their broad backs with responsive merriment. It became like a little bacchanalian rout in a New England field on a

summer afternoon, but they did not know it in their simple hearts."

But on this free-hearted merriment scowled the avaricious face of the owner of the cherry trees, Silas Berry, whose predominant trait seemed to "mold his face to itself unchangeably, as the face of a hunting dog is molded to his speed and watchfulness." As the happy party were passing homeward they had confirmed with a chorus of assents the remark of Thomas Payne that he guessed the old man wasn't so bad after all, when suddenly Silas himself advanced toward them, drew out a roll of paper, and handed it to Thomas Payne. At Thomas's inquiry as to what it was, the old man's face lighted up with the ingenuous smile of a child, and he replied in a wheedling whisper, "It's nothin' but the bill . . . for the cherries you eat. I've always been in the habit of chargin' more, but I've took off a leetle this time." Thomas in disgusted surprise crammed the amount of the bill into the eagerly outstretched hand of the old man, but before the party had reached the foot of the hill the running feet of William Berry, the old man's son, were heard, and a hoarse voice called out to Thomas Payne to stop. William sternly demanded the amount the latter had paid his father for the cherries, and paid it back with trembling fingers, remarking as he did so, "Take it, for God's sake!"

Despite their efforts to ease his chagrin over his father's unparalleled meanness, William Berry broke from them and "pelted up the hill with his heart so bitterly sore that it seemed as if he trod on it at every step." But a voice kept crying after him, there was "a soft flutter of girlish skirts," and presently the hand of Rebecca Thayer touched his arm. It was the touch of love and sympathy, and

William blushed. "Don't you feel bad; don't you feel bad. You aren't to blame."—"Isn't he my father?"—"You aren't to blame for that."—"Disgrace comes without blame," said William bitterly as he moved on. But protesting her desire to be with him and to sympathize with him, Rebecca raised both her arms and put them about his neck. "He leaned his cheek down against her soft hair. 'Poor William,' she whispered, as if he had been her child instead of her lover." Yet such spontaneous and heroic love in the presence of disgrace and public ridicule was destined to melt the conventional bonds of virtue and bring upon itself the nemesis of social and family ostracism.

Rebecca's mother, Deborah, on her daughter's return home, cross-examined her as to her lateness, and discovering something of the real situation with reference to William Berry, pitilessly ordered Rebecca to give up all thought of marriage with him, threatening, in fact, to disown her if she married against her parents' wishes: "I shan't have any child but Ephraim left, that's all!"

Ephraim, the professional boy invalid, whiningly pleaded with his mother to know what Rebecca had done, but he was suddenly sent to the pump to wash his face and hands; and as soon as he had filled himself with milk toast and been denied a piece of pie, he was sent from the table to begin his nightly study of the catechism. Muttering angrily under his breath, Ephraim got the catechism out of the top drawer of his father's desk and began "droning out in his weak, sulky voice the first question therein, 'What is the chief end of man?'" He had been nightly drilled for the last five years on the "Assembly's Catechism," when his general health admitted—"and sometimes, it seemed to Ephraim, when it had not admitted." In fact, his mother,

fearing a sudden death for her youngest son, was striving to fit him for a higher state to which he might soon be called. And so, before the "Catechism," Ephraim had been driven laboriously through the whole Bible, chapter by chapter. His mother was pitiless in this regard, and with stern pathos she would say to his protesting and sympathetic father: "If he can't learn nothin' about books, he's got to learn about his own soul. He's got to, whether it hurts him or not."

The iron insistence of Deborah Thayer that her daughter Rebecca should not marry William Berry, the young man of her choice, had resulted in the daughter's illustrating her mother's own obstinacy and in Rebecca's going secretly with William until she had come to love him not wisely but too well. The unfortunate result had become the talk of the little community, — especially of the gossipmongers, — but as yet it had not been revealed to the iron-willed mother. She had indeed noticed a peculiar change in Rebecca, — an expression in her face that was foreign to it, a growing antipathy to society, and a certain air of misery that was inexplicable even to the penetrating eyes of Deborah Thayer. She began to relent toward her daughter, to watch over her with a sort of fierce tenderness. "She brewed great bowls of domestic medicines from nuts and herbs, and made her drink whether she would or not. She sent her to bed early, and debarred her from the night air." But not a shadow of suspicion ever crossed her mind that night after night that same daughter slipped across the north parlor and out the front door into the darkness to meet her forbidden lover. The mother, in fact, was secretly dreaming high dreams for her daughter's matrimonial future; and late at night, after Rebecca had gone to bed

in her little room off the north parlor, the sternly ambitious mother knitted yard after yard of lace that should properly furnish forth her daughter as a bride. She even drove alone on a windy and snowy December day to a neighboring village to buy material for a new dress for Rebecca. It was snowing hard as she returned, and her green veil was white as she entered the kitchen. "I kept the dress under the buffalo-robe, an' that ain't hurt any," she vigorously remarked; but when, after proudly shaking out the folds of the gleaming crimson thibet, she got no answering enthusiasm from her daughter, she cried out sharply, "You don't deserve to have a new dress; you act like a stick of wood."

The next morning Deborah worked assiduously at cutting and making the new dress for Rebecca, and about the middle of the forenoon she was ready to try it on. She made Rebecca stand up in the middle of the kitchen floor and began fitting the crimson gown to her; when, suddenly recognizing something significant in Rebecca's heavily drooping form, she gave a great start, pushed her daughter violently from her, and stood aloof, looking at her, while the clock ticked in the dreadful silence. "Look at me," said Deborah. "And Rebecca looked; it was like uncovering a disfigurement or a sore." The truth of premature passion was out, and Rebecca's eyes and soul shrank from her mother as the latter cried, "Go out of this house." And Rebecca obeyed without a sound. Immediately after dinner Deborah plodded through the snow to her son Barney's, and in a strange voice bade him go after William Berry and make him marry Rebecca. And when the startled Barney inquired Rebecca's whereabouts, his mother harshly retorted: "I don't know where she is. I turned her out because I wouldn't have her in the house. You brought it all on us;

if you hadn't acted so I shouldn't have felt as I did about her marryin'. Now you can go and find her, and get William Berry an' make him marry her. I ain't got anything more to do with it."

When this marriage by compulsion was accomplished and Rebecca was established in the old Bennett house as Mrs. William Berry, she lived with curtains down and doors bolted. Never a neighbor saw her face at door or window, and she would not go to the door if anybody knocked. Even to her own brother Barney she was not at home, though he begged to be admitted, and declared he didn't want to say anything hard. And William himself was scarcely noticed by his own father and mother, — such was the unforgiving hardness of their sense of disgrace and their "righteous" wrath; and as for his mother's going to see her son's wife, "Hannah Berry would have set herself up in a pillory" sooner than do that. As for Rebecca's mother, Deborah Thayer, she never spoke of her daughter; and when Rebecca's little dead child went by in the hearse, Deborah would not attend the funeral, though Rebecca's poor old father did.

Since Rebecca's forced marriage Ephraim, her sickly younger brother, had had a sterner experience than ever with his mother, Deborah, who with her strenuous Puritan soul was bent on fitting her invalid boy for heaven. Since all her vigorous training had failed in the case of his sister, the mother redoubled her spiritual discipline over her last child until his life became an almost intolerable series of restraints and duties. On account of his chronic illness he was shut up to a very scanty and simple diet, — no cake, no pie, no plum from a pie; and he now had daily a double stint in the catechism. One brilliant moonlight night, feeling a little better as he lay propped up with pillows in his

bedroom, and feeling also the irrepressible boy in him, Ephraim stole out of the house, when his father and mother were safely asleep, took his brother's sled, and coasted alone till midnight, having the one playtime of his life. "He ignored his feeble and laboring breath of life. He trod upon, he outspeeded, all infirmities of the flesh in his wild triumph of the spirit." His shouts and halloos rang out as he shot down the hill; and when he got home and was ready for bed once more this invalid boy bethought him of the forbidden mince pie in the pantry. He slid as "noiseless as a shadow in the moonlight" through the kitchen, past his parents' door, climbed a "meal-bucket," reached his pie, broke out a "great jagged half," and back on the edge of his bed devoured his juicy feast. He had had his first good time.

The next morning he was actually ill, but kept it from his mother. As she went out to drive to a neighboring town for sugar and tea, which she refused to buy of her son-in-law, she left word with Ephraim to tell his father to finish paring the apples so that she could make them into "sauce" on her return. He promised, but when his mother got out of sight he forgot his promise and played "holly-gull" with his father. When his mother discovered on her return that Ephraim had ignored her order she went out to the shed. Meanwhile the boy, now actually very ill, seemed to have lost all fear of her; he felt very strange and "as if he were sinking away from it all through deep abysses." Deborah returned with a stout stick, and, against the protests of her husband, led the way to Ephraim's bedroom. The boy staggered as he went, and she saw how ill he looked; but she could not this time be daunted by that from her high spiritual purpose. "Ephraim," said his mother, "I have spared the rod with you all my life because you were sick. Your brother and

your sister have both rebelled against the Lord and against me. You are all the child I've got left. You've got to mind me and do right. I ain't goin' to spare you any longer because you ain't well. It is better you should be sick than be well and wicked and disobedient. It is better that your body should suffer than your immortal soul. Stand still." And with that the stick descended, the boy made a strange noise, and then sank in a heap upon the floor. All of Deborah Thayer's mustard and hot water, all of her remorseful agony of prayer, had no effect to stir once more the life in poor little Ephraim's body. Indeed, she prayed all night for justification, and the watchers over Ephraim's dead body looked at each other with shocked significance. When later it became known to Deborah Thayer, through the kind offices of the doctor's wife, that her boy had indulged, the night before his death, in hours of coasting and in mince-pie eating, her agonized mind was somewhat relieved; but the recent tragedy of her life and the sudden shock of relief proved too much for this fiercely torn soul, driven by the nemesis of Puritan conscience and her own implacable will, and she sank out of life as suddenly as the son whom she had punished for his eternal good.

With patient sweetness amid a secret poverty that finally brought her "on the town," Sylvia Crane had waited twenty years for Richard Alger, her regular Sunday-night wooer; and finally, the morning following the wedding of her niece, Rose Berry, Sylvia, with a bundle of bedding, a chest, and a rocking-chair, had started on a wood-sled for the poorhouse, But, strange to say, as they passed Richard Alger's home, he appeared as a rescuer, compelled the old man to drive back to the Crane house, and there made a contrite confession to Sylvia, who in all her own poverty and blasted hope

kept a heart of sympathy and pity open for Richard. "I've been meaner than sin," said Richard, "an' I don't know as it makes it any better because I couldn't seem to help it. I didn't forget you a single minute, Sylvia, an' I was awful sorry for you, an' there wasn't a Sabbath night that I didn't want to come more than I wanted to go to heaven. But I couldn't. I couldn't nohow. I've always had to travel in tracks, an' no man livin' knows how deep a track he's in till he gets jolted out of it an' can't get back. But I've got into a track now, an' I'll die before I get out of it." And Sylvia's face flushed "like an old flower revived in a new spring." He married her one Sunday morning at the minister's, and then together they went to "meetin'," — although Sylvia's sister, Hannah Berry, was for having a public wedding, caustically observing: "If I'd been goin' with a feller as long as you have with him, I wouldn't get cheated out of a weddin', anyhow. I'd have a weddin', an' I'd have cake, an' I'd ask folks, especially after what's happened. I'd let 'em see I wa'n't quite so far gone, if I had set out for the poorhouse once."

And ten years after his quarrel with Charlotte Barnard and her father, Barney Thayer, — heroically nursed in the face of public opinion by the loyal Charlotte, — finally was able to conquer his constitutional "setness," as Richard Alger had done; and resolutely getting up from his sick bed he marched laboriously up the hill to the Barnard house to announce to his old and never wavering sweetheart that he had at last "come back."

By such unrelenting characterization as this has the author set forth in "Pembroke" the story of a New England community whose grim rigidity of life would be incredible were it not confirmed by the strong and subtle art of so realistic a writer as Miss Wilkins.

CHAPTER IV

"DEEPHAVEN" BY SARAH ORNE JEWETT

Just before his death James Russell Lowell wrote to Miss Jewett's publishers in London: "I am very glad to hear that Miss Jewett's delightful stories are to be reprinted in England. Nothing more pleasingly characteristic of rural life in New England has been written, and they have long been valued by the judicious here." And the world of "judicious" American readers still agrees with this discriminating judgment. The daughter of "A Country Doctor," Miss Jewett had all the advantages, as a girl, of going about the country with her father on his visits to inland farms or along the seacoast; and "when the time came that my own world of imagination was more real to me than any other, I was sometimes perplexed at my father's directing my attention to certain points of interest in the characters or surroundings of our acquaintances. I cannot help believing that he recognized, long before I did myself, in what direction the current of purpose in my life was setting. Now as I write my sketches of country life, I remember again and again the wise things he said, and the sights he made me see."

Such peculiar preparation for portraying in permanent literary form the characteristics of certain provincial types in New England life bore fruit in "Deephaven," her first literary and artistic success. The fact, too, that her early life was

spent in the old Maine settlement of Berwick, with its once flourishing shipping trade, its sailors and " sea-tanned captains," and that her own grandfather had been a sea-captain, gave to the writing of such a collection of sketches as " Deephaven " an authoritative and natural touch that constitutes much of their charm and value. To all these favorable conditions must be added the possession by Miss Jewett of a literary art that is almost classic in its clearness and grace, its vital sympathy, and its unaffected sincerity. If, as she herself says, " the distinction of modern literature is the evocation of sympathy," and if, as Plato said, the best thing that can be done for the people of a state is to make them acquainted with one another, Miss Jewett's literary purpose has been very happily accomplished.

The summer that Kate Lancaster spent at the old Brandon house in Deephaven, in company with her friend who recounts the narrative, was indeed a summer of unique charm and delight — for Deephaven was a quaint old place with high rocks and woods and hills, and Brandon house is suggestive of that fine old home in Berwick, Maine, built in 1750, where Miss Jewett herself was born. Twelve miles from Deephaven the two girls left the railway and took passage in a stage-coach, with only one passenger besides themselves, who was a very large, thin, weather-beaten woman that looked tired, lonesome, and good-natured. She was delighted to respond to the remark that it was very dusty, with another remark to the effect that she should think everybody was sweeping, and that she always felt, after being in the cars awhile, as if she " had been taken all to pieces and left in the different places." This genial and talkative fellow-passenger, Mrs. Kew, proved to be the wife of the keeper of the Deephaven light, and she

and her husband were destined to give the two young ladies some very unusual diversions during the summer.

Upon the inquiry as to whether Mrs. Kew knew the Brandon house in Deephaven, the genial soul replied that she knew it as well as the meeting-house. "'He' wrote me some o' Mrs. Lancaster's folks were going to take the Brandon house this summer, an' so you are the ones? It's a sightly old place; I used to go and see Miss Katherine. She must have left a power of chinaware." Mrs. Kew also told how she herself would always be "a real up-country woman" if she lived there a hundred years. "The sea doesn't come natural to me, it kind of worries me, though you won't find a happier woman than I be, 'long shore."

As the stage drove up to the old Brandon "place," the young ladies noted with satisfaction the row of poplars in front of the great white house, the tall lilacs, the crowds of rose bushes still in bloom, the box borders, and the great elms at the side of the house and down the road. And the hall door stood wide open. Within, it was a home of great possibilities, — four large rooms on the lower floor, and six above, a wide hall in each story, and a "fascinating garret" over the whole, where were many mysterious old chests and boxes, in one of which the girls found the love-letters of Kate's grandmother. The rooms all had elaborate cornices, and the lower hall was very fine, with an archway dividing it, and all kinds of panelings, and a great door at either end. But "the best chamber" rather inspired dread. It had a huge curtained bed, and the paper on the walls had been captured in a French prize some time in the last century, — the color of it being an "unearthly pink and a forbidding maroon, with dim white spots, which gave it the

appearance of having molded." The great lounge made the girls low-spirited, after hearing that Miss Brandon herself didn't like it, because she had seen so many of her relatives lie there dead. There were fantastic china ornaments from Bible subjects on the mantel, and the only picture was one of the Maid of Orleans, tied with an "unnecessarily strong rope to a very stout stake." The west parlor downstairs proved to be the girls' favorite room, with its great fireplace framed in blue and white Dutch tiles which represented graphically the careers of the good and the bad man. The last two of the series were of very high art, — a great coffin stood in the foreground of each, and the virtuous man was being led off by "two disagreeable-looking angels," while the wicked one was hastening from an "indescribable but unpleasant assemblage of claws and horns and eyes which is rapidly advancing from the distance, open-mouthed, and bringing a chain with it."

In their visits to Mrs. Kew and the lighthouse Kate and her friend were particularly interested in a row of marks on the back of the wide "fore door," where Mrs. Kew had tried to keep account one summer of the number of people who innocently inquired about the depredations of the neighbors' chickens; and they were also specially interested in Mrs. Kew's collection of "relations" in the form of photographs, and in her critical remarks about special features in the faces. "That's my oldest brother's wife, Clorinthy Adams that was. She's well-featured, if it were not for her nose, and that looks as if it had been thrown at her, and she wasn't particular about having it on firm, in hopes of getting a better one. She sets by her looks though."

Among the first of Deephaven callers on the two girls from Boston was a prim little old woman by the name of

Mrs. Patton. She wore a neat cap and "front," but no bonnet, and had over her shoulders a little three-cornered shawl. She was very short and straight and thin, and "darted like a pickerel" when she moved about. She impressed Kate's friend as an undoubtedly capable person with "faculty." When Kate remarked that she had been inquiring whether Mrs. Patton was still in Deephaven, the prim little woman excitedly exclaimed: "Land o' compassion! Where'd ye s'pose I'd be, dear? I ain't like to move away from Deephaven now, after I've held by the place so long I've got as many roots as the big ellum."

The care-taking Mrs. Patton hoped that Kate and her friend had found the house in "middling order," for "me and Mis' Dockum have done the best we knew, — opened the windows and let in the air and tried to keep it from getting damp. I fixed all the woolens with fresh camphire and tobacco the last o' the winter; you have to be dreadful careful in one o' these old houses, less every thing gets creaking with moths in no time. . . . I set a trap there, but it was older'n the ten commandments, that trap was, and the spring's rusty. . . . I see your aunt's cat setting out on the front steps. She never was no great of a mouser, but it went to my heart to see how pleased she looks! Come right back, didn't she?" She continued in a reminiscent strain of pleased garrulity, recalling the funeral of Kate's aunt, Miss Brandon, and pronouncing this unqualified eulogy: "She was a good Christian woman, Miss Katherine was. 'The memory of the just is blessed'; that's what Mr. Lorimer said in his sermon the Sunday after she died, and there wasn't a blood relation there to hear it." So spoke in grateful stream the "Widow Jim" (to distinguish her from the widow of Jack Patton), who was a distinctly useful per-

sonage in the community of Deephaven. She made elaborate rugs and carpets, she "cleaned house" at the Carews' and Lorimers', she had no equal in sickness and could brew every old-fashioned dose and every variety of herb tea, and she often served her patient after death by being commander-in-chief at her funeral, — even to the making out of the order of the procession, since she had all the local genealogy and relationship at her tongue's end. In fact, a mistake in precedence at a funeral was counted an awful thing in Deephaven; and the young ladies once chanced to hear some bitter remarks because the cousins of the departed wife had been placed after the husband's relatives, — "the blood relations ridin' behind them that was only kin by marriage!"

The good opinion in which Mrs. Patton was held in the community was generously reflected by Mrs. Dockum, as the young ladies were returning from the post-office after their call on the Widow Jim. "Willin' woman," said Mrs. Dockum, "always been respected; got an uncommon facility o' speech. . . . Dreadful tough time of it with her husband, shif'less and drunk all his time," continued Mrs. Dockum, in the pleasure of painful reminiscence. "Noticed that dent in the side of her forehead, I s'pose? That's where he liked to have killed her; slung a stone bottle at her." At the exclamation of shocked interest on the part of the young ladies, Mrs. Dockum considerately went into details: "She don't like to have it inquired about; but she and I were sitting up with 'Manda Damer one night, and she gave me the particulars. . . . Had sliced cucumbers for breakfast that morning; he was very partial to them, and he wanted some vinegar. Happened to be two bottles in the cellar-way; were just alike, and one of 'em was vinegar and the other had sperrit in it at haying-time. He

takes up the wrong one and pours on quick, and out come the hayseed and flies, and he give the bottle a sling and it hit her there where you see the scar; might put the end of your finger into the dent. He said he meant to break the bottle ag'in the door, but it went slantwise, sort of. . . . He died in debt; drank like a fish." And then Mrs. Dockum rounded her story with a concise eulogy of the widow: "Yes, 'twas a shame, nice woman; good consistent church member; always been respected; useful among the sick."

Among the most interesting types in Deephaven society were the ancient mariners who sunned themselves like turtles every pleasant summer morning on the wharves. They were known by etiquette as "captains," though the author is inclined to believe that some of them took their title by brevet upon arriving at the proper age. They used to sit close together because so many of them were deaf, and their reminiscences ran upon the voyage of the *Sea Duck* or the wanderings of the *Ocean Rover*. The captains used occasionally to get into violent altercations over the tonnage of some craft; they pulled away at little black pipes, consuming tobacco in fabulous quantities; and, needless to say, much of their attention was given to the weather. The appearance of an outsider was wont to cause a "disapproving silence"; but the girls were once bold enough to overhear from behind the corner of the warehouse the oldest and wisest of them all, Captain Isaac Horn, who was evidently giving one of his favorite stories, about some cloth he had once purchased in Bristol, which the shopkeeper delayed sending till just as they were ready to sail.

"I happened to take a look at that cloth," droned the captain in a loud voice, "and as quick as I got sight of it, I spoke

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THE OLD CAPTAINS.

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onpleasant of that swindling English fellow, and the crew, they stood back. I was dreadful high-tempered in them days, mind ye; and I had the gig manned. We was out in the stream, just ready to sail. 'Twas no use waiting any longer for the wind to change, and we was going north-about. I went ashore, and when I walks into his shop ye never see a creatur' so wilted. Ye see the miser'ble sculpin thought I'd never stop to open the goods, an' it was a chance I did, mind ye! 'Lor,' says he, grinning and turning the color of a biled lobster, 'I s'posed ye were a standing out to sea by this time.' 'No,' says I, 'and I've got my men out here on the quay a landing that cloth o' yourn, and if you don't send just what I bought and paid for down there to go back in the gig within fifteen minutes, I'll take ye by the collar and drop ye into the dock.' I was twice the size of him, mind ye, and master strong. 'Don't ye like it?' says he, edging round; 'I'll change it for ye, then.' Ter'ble perlite he was. 'Like it?' says I, 'it looks as if it were built of dog's hair and divil's wool, kicked together by spiders; and it's coarser than Irish frieze; three threads to an *armful*,' says I."

And there was Captain Lant, who knew all the local family history and how to bring the conversation around to a point where he could work in one of his pet stories, — the one he told with special relish, and with the solemn declaration that it was true, being a strange story of telepathy, which Miss Jewett gives in the captain's quaint and vivid language and with all his love of detail. The last letter received from the old captain by the young ladies on their return to Boston was headed with the latitude and longitude of Deephaven, and was signed, "Respectfully yours with esteem, Jacob Lant (condemned as unseaworthy)."

One of the fishermen whom Kate and her friend knew least of all was an odd-looking, silent sort of man, more sunburnt and weather-beaten than any of the others. He was locally known as "Danny," and one morning, finding him at work cleaning fish in a shed, Kate's friend ventured the judgment that she thought mackerel were the prettiest fish that swim. "So do I, miss, not to say but I've seen more fancy-looking fish down in Southern waters, bright as any flower you ever see; but a mackerel," holding up one admiringly, "why, they're so clean-built and trig-looking! Put a cod alongside, and he looks as lumbering as an old-fashioned Dutch brig aside a yacht." And tossing some fish heads to the cats that suddenly walked in as if they felt at home, he was reminded of a good cat story, which he proceeded to tell. At the conclusion of his narrative, when he expressed his preference for haddock over cod, and Kate asked whether it was cod or haddock that had a black stripe along their sides, Kate's friend cried out with superior knowledge, "Oh, those are haddock; they say that the Devil caught a haddock once, and it slipped through his fingers and got scorched; so all the haddock had the same mark afterward." Whereat Danny, smiling at her peculiar lore, remarked wisely, "Ye mustn't believe all the old stories ye hear, mind ye!"

There was also the prominent but somewhat visionary Captain Sands, who had a sort of marine museum in an old warehouse and was "a great hand for keeping things." He took the young ladies out to Black Rock to fish for cunners, and on the way gave them some of his judgments on the weather, observing that his "gran'ther" used to say that "a growing moon chaws up the clouds." "Some folks lay all the weather to the moon, accordin' to where she

quarters, and when she's in perigee we're going to have this kind of weather, and when she's in apogee she's got to do so and so for sartain; but gran'ther he used to laugh at all them things. . . . Well, he did use to depend on the moon some; everybody knows we aren't so likely to have foul weather in a growing moon as we be when she's waning. But some folks I could name, they can't do nothing without having the moon's opinion on it."

Deephaven had as peculiar types, also, old Mrs. Bonny and Miss Sally Chauncey — the former, to whom the minister took the young ladies for a call, living a few miles from the town in company with a little black horse, a yellow-and-white dog, and a flock of hens; and the latter remaining alone in her ruined home and imagining in her harmless insanity that she was still part of the social aristocracy to which she formerly belonged. Mrs. Bonny's costume was somewhat masculine in its make-up, as she wore a man's coat, cut off so that it made an odd short jacket, and a pair of men's boots. She had, besides, short skirts, and two or three aprons, the inner one being a dress-apron and the outer ones being thrown aside on the entrance of the visitors. A tight cap with strings completed her costume. Behind the stove in the kitchen a sick turkey was being nursed, while the flock of hens was remorselessly hustled out with a hemlock broom, since callers were present.

In the conversation that ensued with the eccentric widow, the minister's reminder that Parson Reid preached the following Sunday in the neighboring schoolhouse recalled to Mrs. Bonny old Parson Padelford. " He'd get worked up, and he'd shut up the Bible and preach the hair off your head, 'long at the end of the sermon." And she also

described to them with much relish a recent revival where she found one of her uncertain neighbors praying, — old Ben Patey, — "he always lays out to get converted, and he kep' it up diligent till I couldn't stand it no longer; and by and by says he, 'I've been a wanderer'; and I up and says, 'Yes, you have, I'll back ye up on that, Ben; ye've wandered around my wood lot and spoilt half the likely young oaks and ashes I've got, a-stealing your basket stuff.' And the folks laughed out loud, and up he got and cleared. He's an awful old thief, and he's no idea of being anything else. I wa'n't a-goin' to set there and hear him makin' b'lieve to the Lord."

Like Miss Sally Chauncey there were many in Deephaven who imagined they were still in the circle of the privileged class, and who had distinct pity for people who were obliged to live in other parts of the world. As Miss Honora Carew loftily remarked, the tone of Deephaven society had always been very high, and it was very nice that there had never been any manufacturing element introduced, — any disagreeable foreign population. Truly a delightful old seaport is Deephaven, even if it is such only in name, — for Sarah Orne Jewett once dropped anchor there.

PROVINCIAL TYPES IN THE SOUTH

CHAPTER V

A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE FIELD

SINCE the Civil War the "New South" has made a remarkable record in creative literature, and among its truest and most sympathetic and artistic interpreters few have so high a rank as Thomas Nelson Page. Such books as "The Burial of the Guns," "Elsket," "The Old Gentleman of the Black Stock," and "Red Rock" give with close insight and unfailing charm phases of Southern life that have passed, or are passing, away; while "In Ole Virginia," Mr. Page's best-known collection of short stories, has become almost a classic in its presentation, through the negro dialect, of the humor and moving pathos, the hospitality and grace and heroic chivalry, associated with the best Southern types. Whether we see the breaking tragedy of war and love when Miss Anne kisses the dead face of "Marse Chan," or whether we hear the loyal old negro, — when the minister asks who gives "Meh Lady" to the Northern "Cun'l," — respond proudly and protectingly, "Ole Billy," we know we are in the presence of brave, strong, beautiful life that was the finest fruitage of the Old South.

Few more likable darkies have been created than F. Hopkinson Smith's Nebuchadnezzar — or "Chad" for short, — found in "Colonel Carter of Cartersville." As a delightfully

humorous and sympathetic characterization of certain Virginia types the book goes naturally with the literature of the South; and while much of it is in the nature of an extravaganza, the figure and face of the inimitable Colonel Carter will long remain the index of an irresistible personality in American fiction. Whether he is royally presiding at dinner with the Major and Fitz, or financing in his imagination "The Cartersville and Warrentown Air Line Railroad" which is to furnish "the garden spot of Virginia" an outlet to the sea, or preparing in dead earnest for "the field of honah," or gallantly filling his glass to "that greatest of all blessings — a true Southern lady," — he is a refreshing and alluring type of Southern humanity developed by the "old school." And then there is Miss Nancy with her subtle generosity and her rustling silk and her perfume of sweet lavender; and the pugnacious Major Yancey, late of the Confederate army, with his affinity for mint julep; and his impressive but bibulous friend, the Honorable I. B. Kerfoot, presiding "jedge" of the district court of Fairfax County, Virginia.

The Georgia negro and "cracker" have been peculiarly fortunate in having as an interpreter Joel Chandler Harris, whose "Free Joe" and "Mingo" have had so wide a reading. As Mr. Howells suggests, Mr. Harris's work as a student of white character (albeit of low life) has not been fully recognized, by reason of the remarkable popularity of "Uncle Remus" and his absorbing animal stories. Yet "At Teague Poteet's" presents with subtle humor and dramatic sense the unique and adventurous life of the "moonshining" mountaineers, with its rough but loyal *camaraderie*, its sudden raids by revenue officers, its desperate daring, and its instinctive hospitality. Hog Moun-

tain had its Teague Poteet, with his little fifty-acre farm overlooking Gullettsville, and it had its wild flowers, chief of which was Sis Poteet, daughter of Puss Poteet; and the time came when Sis must needs be educated in the academy at Gullettsville. Whereat Sis protested because she had no "cloze." Teague, her father, tramping skyward for game, came suddenly upon the cap and worm of a disused whisky still, and saw the clothes problem solved. Whisky educated Sis Poteet; and in time a deputy marshal, Woodward by name, fell in love with her (who could help it?); her neighbors, Mrs. Hightower and Mrs. Parmalee, gave their unstinted approval; and when Sis and "Cap" were married, everybody on Hog Mountain sent a contribution, and even Uncle Jake Norris set a "jug er licker," that had actually been "stomped by the govunment," behind Teague's stable door for the necessary refreshment of the wedding guests. Teague and Uncle Jake and Sis are strongly individualized, and the unconventional charm of the mountain girl is an alluring element in the story.

Mr. Harris's most distinct contribution to American fiction, however, is of course the legends of old plantation life as told in the unconsciously droll dialect of "Uncle Remus," that white-haired old philosopher who is the universal authority on "Brer Rabbit," "Brer Wolf," "Mr. Possum," and "Brer Fox," and all their little stratagems and wiles. One's imagination can always see the spectacled old darky, pegging at his coarse shoes or making horse-collars out of "wahoo" bark, while the large-eyed "little boy" sits close and watches his authoritative face for fear of losing a word about how Brer Rabbit outwitted Brer Fox, or how, for once, through the inimitable "Tar-Baby," Brer Fox proved too much for the redoubtable rabbit, or about the "awful

fate of Mr. Wolf" when Brer Rabbit cured him of fleas by scalding him to death in the big chest. How Mr. Rabbit finds his match at last in the subtlety of Brer Terrapin, who beats him in the race and takes the money, much to the enjoyment of "Miss Meadows en de gals," and how Brer Fox, in his envious pursuit of Mr. Rabbit, who was "fishin' fer suckers" at the bottom of a well, went down in one bucket as Brer Rabbit came up in the other, singing philosophically,

> "Good-by, Brer Fox, take keer yo' cloze,
> Fer dis is de way de worril goes;
> Some goes up en some goes down,
> You'll git ter de bottom all safe en soun',"—

how all this happened with such beautiful inconsistency no one but Joel Chandler Harris can tell us.

He has touched in so many delightful phases the old negro's sublime credulity, unconscious drollery, fellow-sympathy with the more helpless of the animals, and tender love of the "little boy," that it is difficult to decide whether "Uncle Remus and his Friends," or "Nights with Uncle Remus," or "Uncle Remus; His Songs and Sayings" should take precedence. But since Mr. Frost has illustrated the last-mentioned volume with more than a hundred drawings, some of which are a perfect embodiment of the spirit of the text, one is inclined to give his first choice to this particular collection of legends. Mr. Harris himself says, in his dedication of the book to Mr. Frost, "The book was mine, but now you have made it yours, both sap and pith." And to one who has delighted in the inimitable illustrations of the book the praise of Mr. Frost is not unmerited.

Dividing in a way the attention of the literary world to

Southern fiction, Mr. George W. Cable stands with Mr. Harris, — though in so distinct a field that the question of which is the greater is neither important nor perhaps possible. Even if Mr. Cable's shorter Creole stories are said in the judgment of some critics to have had their day (and a very bright one it was), it is hard to conceive when the delicate charm and trembling devotion of "Madame Delphine" will cease to touch the imagination and sympathy; or the rich humanity of Père Jerome, or the mysterious personality of Monsieur Vignevielle (alias Capitaine Lemaitre, the pirate), or the vision of white loveliness he stole that memorable night when the moon shone and the mocking-bird broke into song, or the prostrate figure of the dead mother at the confessional, — the quadroon mother who sinned for her daughter's happiness. Nor can one easily forget how under the enthusiastic eye of "Bonaventure" the children rang the bell for "light, libbuty, and education"; or the impressive visit to Bonaventure's school of the immortal George Washington Tarbox, a forerunner of his own "Album of Universal Information"; or the secret but finally triumphant passion of Bonaventure for the queenlike Sidonie.

With all the changing conditions that accompanied the cession of Louisiana in 1803 as a background, with the pall of slavery hanging over it, and the picturesqueness yet impossibility of an absurd but heroic devotion to a social theory of caste as an element in his story, Mr. Cable has written in "The Grandissimes" one of the most striking and artistic pieces of fiction in American literature. And although the Creoles of New Orleans have resented what they consider a prejudiced presentation of their attitude toward slavery and the quadroon class, they have great cause for gratifica-

tion that a novelist of such imagination, insight, and delicate touch has individualized in permanent literary form such rare and winning types as Honoré Grandissime, the broad-minded and gracefully heroic merchant who foresaw the true destiny of his people; such bewitching, shy, and dainty beings as Aurore de Grapion and her daughter Clotilde; and such free-hearted, naïve, and irrepressible traits as go to the making of Raoul Innerarity, the painter of "Louisiana rif-using to hanter de h-Union." The immigrant Joseph Frowenfeld may perhaps be criticised as a lay figure, but he stands for sanity and justness, and in the end reaches even the most fastidious of Creole hearts. Agricola Fusilier, as the embodiment of the unreasoning, ridiculous, but relentless, caste spirit and of opposition to the new "Américain" government, may lack a certain definiteness of characterization; but as, dying, he joins the hands of Aurore, the daughter of his old enemy, and Honoré, his nephew, — the promise of all that was best in the Creole future — he becomes a very significant and essential part of the story. As for Palmyre Philosophe, the vengeful practicer of voudou arts, — where in literature will you find a stranger figure or one that appeals more directly to the imagination and sympathy? Her hopeless love for the white Honoré and the hopeless love of herself on the part of the less white Honoré, "f. m. c." (free man of color), her strange power over the black giant, Bras-Coupé, and her terrorizing of Agricola himself, bring her into a wide circle of absorbing interest. Whether the horrible fate of poor Clemence seems, as it does in the judgment of some critics, to be unnecessarily detailed for the purposes of art, or whether by it Mr. Cable intended to illustrate the power of superstition over master as well as slave, it doubtless is true enough to certain phases of slave life;

and for dramatic strength and haunting vividness the story of "Bras-Coupé" stands out like a picture painted in blood. Bras-Coupé, with chains on his feet, chains on his wrists, and an iron yoke about his neck; Bras-Coupé, with his tiger eyes softening before Palmyre, whom he loved; Bras-Coupé, his gigantic length prostrate in the dust as he worshiped the sister of Honoré Grandissime; the same imperious giant, at the wedding, felling his Spanish master to the floor, or amid snakes and bats and lizards living a hunted outlaw in the heart of the swamps; Bras-Coupé, with uplifted palm spreading his malediction over house and fields, or lassoed by the Spanish police in his wild and drunken dance, or strapped face down and smitten with the lash, or shorn of his ears and with severed tendons and bleeding back stretched on a bed of dry grass; and last of all the mutilated slave holding his dead master's little child and dropping his first tears upon the infant's hand, and inaudibly moving his lips as he waves his hand abroad and lifts the dreadful curse, — such is the series of pictures that Mr. Cable paints in this powerful epitome of the savage side of slavery. But, after all, the surviving impressions of this great novel are not those of wrong and senseless social systems, but of those delightful and sparkling women, — Aurore and Clotilde,— drawn with such exquisite art by Mr. Cable, and of that finished and masterly type of Creole character, Honoré Grandissime.

Besides their presentation in the work of Mr. Cable, New Orleans and Louisiana have been fortunate also in the intimate and sympathetic treatment given them in the short stories of Grace King, such as "Tales of a Time and Place," "Monsieur Motte," and "Balcony Stories"; while Ruth McEnery Stuart, a native of Louisiana, has written with convincing closeness to Southern life the tale of

"Babette, A Little Creole Girl," "Sonny" (the story of an Arkansas boy), and "Napoleon Jackson: The Gentleman of the Plush Rocker."

Kentucky has a striking phase of her life set forth with essential truth and dramatic interest in such short stories as "A Cumberland Vendetta," by John Fox, Jr., — the characteristic family feud, which ends only with the extinction of the male members of the family, as is so vividly illustrated by Mr. Clemens in his "Huckleberry Finn," and in some of the stories of Miss Murfree. The desperate hand-to-hand fight on the mountain side — as pictured in "A Cumberland Vendetta" — between Rome Stetson and Jasper Lewallen, the boyish representatives of those rival families, was a critical one, for it meant that whichever was "whooped" was thereby compelled to leave the mountains forever. The desperation and treachery and sudden death in this encounter are given with a dramatic vividness that speaks well for the literary art of the writer; and the final picture in which the hunted young outlaw, the last of his family, and Martha Lewallen, the last survivor of hers, set fire to her home, near the fresh-made graves of her father and brother, and face together the dying sunset and the unknown West, is a graphic and pathetic illustration of the desolating effects of family hatreds. Kentucky is to be congratulated, also, in having a citizen who appreciates the romance of her history, and is able, as is James Lane Allen, to throw over it the glamor of his own imagination. His "Flute and Violin, and Other Kentucky Stories," his "Kentucky Cardinal" and "Choir Invisible," and his romance of the Kentucky hemp fields, — "The Reign of Law," — abound in poetic description of their native setting and in loyal sentiment for the history of the state.

Eastern Tennessee found in Miss Murfree, better known as "Charles Egbert Craddock," an interpreter that was thoroughly familiar with the background of her stories, appreciated with an artist's love of color the marvelous panorama of sky and mountain scenery, and entered with full sympathy and loving insight into the strange, free, superstitious, and primitive lives of the isolated mountaineers. So much of description is given at times to the environment of sky and peak, that Miss Murfree is sometimes spoken of as belonging to the "landscape school" in literary art; and it must be confessed that her frequently elaborate descriptive writing seems now and then to delay the movement of her stories, and, except to the highly poetic mind, grows somewhat wearisome. But, nevertheless, when one is past these particular descriptive portions, and is immersed in the intense action of her vigorous characters, one is sure to feel the rare originality of her work and to be absorbed in the dramatic interest with which she portrays the desperate "moonshiner" and the shy mountain lover, the superstitiously religious folk who get "convicted," the gaunt and work-worn old women, and the wild, sweet, unsophisticated beauty and proud strength of will that belong to certain girlish types among the villages and remote farms of the mountain regions of Tennessee. The latter type is seen in the alluring "Euphemy" Sims, who, in "The Juggler," makes her lover, Owen Haines, decide between herself and "prayin' for the power" in public, and who, by the charm of her great gray eyes and the sparkles of gold in her hair, and the innocent sweetness of her nature, wins the temporary love of the "Juggler" himself, Lucien Royce, the accomplished man of the city and the world.

"In the Clouds," and the collection of short stories enti-

tled "In the Tennessee Mountains," and "In the Stranger People's Country," contain, also, Miss Murfree's varied and successful treatment of mountain life; but it is in "The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains" that one gets the largest impression of her knowledge of primitive types, and of her versatile skill in portraying sudden and dramatic action. The opening dialogue far up the mountain side between Dorinda Cayce, the old "moonshiner's" daughter, and her outlawed lover, Rick Tyler, presents a unique picture, — Dorinda, impressive in her simple beauty and buoyant youthfulness, plowing the corn with the gaunt old ox, and Rick, with jingling spurs and dangling pistols, helping her with his horse. A vivid touch of the dramatic is felt when old "Ground-hog" Cayce, on his return at night, learns from "Dorindy" that 'Cajah Green, the sheriff in pursuit of Rick, had threatened her with jail if she refused to tell the whereabouts of her lover. The fierce old man, holding his rifle in the moonlight, insisted that his insulted daughter should make a mark on its barrel in memory of the sheriff's words; but she, knowing that the mark meant certain death to the sheriff, instinctively drew back; whereupon her brother seized her hand, which tremblingly held the long, sharp knife, and guided it in the form of a cross near the rifle's muzzle.

Rick's desperate visit to the "Settlemint" to reënforce his powder supply; his treacherous capture by Gid Fletcher, the blacksmith, for blood money; the appealing, tempestuous tones of Parson Kelsey, the "Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains," as he wrestled in prayer on the great "bald"; his meeting with the blacksmith, and his heroic turning of his other cheek when the blacksmith had suddenly struck him in the face; his uncompromising "prophecy"

that Micajah Green would never be reëlected sheriff; his holding the blacksmith at bay with a "six-shooter" to end the gander-pulling contest; and the mystifying escape of Rick from his temporary prison in the blacksmith shop, — all these are set forth with a picturesque power that makes them live in the memory.

Brother Jake Tobin's unctuous and dramatic reading of the Scriptures in the little log meeting-house on Sunday, and his desperate calling on Brother Reuben Bates to "lead in prayer," were only preliminary to the expected sermon by Hi Kelsey, the "prophet" of the Big Smoky; and not even the tragic words of Arthur Dimmesdale on the scaffold, when he revealed the "scarlet letter" and made his dying confession, had a more horrifying and sensational effect than the prophet's confession that he had lost his faith, and that Hell and the Devil had prevailed against him.

What more satisfying picture than that of the worn and armed outlaw, Rick, sitting before the fire and stealing a sweet interview with Dorinda spinning at her wheel. And how exultant his heart when Dorinda's flashing eyes told him that she would dare to marry him and live in his house, even though a rifle's muzzle or a sheriff's revolver might peek through the rails of the fence! And when he finally announced to her that the real murderer had confessed the crime with which he himself was charged, his delight over her faith in his valor took the repeated form of this proud exclamation: "An' ye warn't afeard! Ye would hev married me and resked it. Ye warn't afeard!"

The sudden discovery and destruction of Cayce's illicit still in the cave; the later visit of old Ground-hog Cayce himself to his dismantled den and the silent nursing of his wrath; the growing inflexibility and hopelessness of Dorinda's face

which began to look even like her father's lowering countenance; her continued unswerving sympathy with the accused "prophet" and her assumed indifference to her lover Rick; the acquittal of the parson and his terrific arraignment of his enemies in court; his strange colloquy with the murderous Cayces the night of the snow-storm, when he pronounced the direful prophecy of future penalties; the wild cry for help in the night when 'Cajah Green was captured, and the wilder ride to the mouth of the cave; and then the truly vicarious sacrifice of the "prophet" as in the confusion of darkness and haste he was hurled to his death instead of his arch-enemy, the sheriff, — such a narrative impresses one not only as a strong piece of dramatic writing but as a convincing "human document" filled with knowledge of a little-known and peculiar people.

CHAPTER VI

"IN OLE VIRGINIA" BY THOMAS NELSON PAGE

In this collection of short stories, written by a Southerner about the South, there are two or three that have already become classic, like "Marse Chan," "Meh Lady," and "Polly." One speaks of them now as if they were a recognized part of American literature; and it is somewhat surprising to learn that the first-mentioned story, when sent to the old *Scribner's Monthly*, brought but eighty dollars, and was held for four years before publication, finally appearing in the new *Century* magazine.

Despite the widespread prejudice against mere dialect as a vehicle for literary expression, it must be confessed that "Marse Chan" and "Meh Lady" would lose much of their unique charm and their closeness to Southern life if they did not seem to emanate from the inmost hearts and experiences of those loyal old "darkies," Sam and Billy. These faithful souls are the natural, unaffected exponents of a phase of Southern life that has largely passed away, — they were an integral and essential part of the social system that is here reflected and characterized in all its free-hearted hospitality, its quick sense of honor and chivalry, its impulsive hot-headedness, and its instinctive bravery.

Unconsciously typical of the Old South was the negro standing with a hoe and a watering-pot in his hand, waiting

at the "worm-fence" for the advent down the path of a noble-looking old setter, gray with age and over-round from too abundant feeding. The setter, like some old-time planter, sauntered slowly, and in lordly oblivion of the negro, up to the fence, while the latter began to take down the rails, talking meanwhile to the dog in a pretended tone of criticism: "Now, I got to pull down de gap, I suppose! Yo' so sp'ilt yo' kyahn hardly walk. Jes' ez able to git over it as I is! Jes' like white folks — think 'cuz you's white and I's black, I got to wait on yo' all de time. Ne'm mine, I ain' gwi' do it!" As his dogship marched sedately through the "gap" and down the road, the negro suddenly discovered a stranger looking on, and hastened to remark somewhat apologetically: "He know I don' mean nothin' by what I sez. He's Marse Chan's dawg, an' he's so ole he kyahn git long no pearter. He know I'se jes' prodjickin' wid 'im."

The darky explained to the stranger that "Marse Chan," (or Channin') was his young master, that the place with "de rock gate-pos's" which the stranger had just passed was "ole Cun'l Chamb'lin's," and that since the war "our place" had been acquired by certain "unknowns" who were probably "half-strainers."

At the request of the stranger to tell him all about "Marse Chan" the old negro recalled, "jes' like 'twuz yistiddy," how "ole marster" (Marse Chan's father), smiling "wusn' a 'possum," came out on the porch with his new-born son in his arms, and catching sight of Sam (the narrator, who was then but eight years old), called him up on the porch and put the baby in his arms, with the solemn injunction that Sam was to be the young master's body-servant as long as he lived. "Yo' jes' ought to a-heard de folks sayin', 'Lawd!

marster, dat boy'll drap dat chile!' 'Naw, he won't,' sez marster; 'I kin trust 'im.'" And then the old master walked after Sam carrying the young master, until Sam entered the house and laid his precious burden on the bed.

Sam recalled, too, how Marse Chan, when in school, once carried Miss Anne, Colonel Chamberlin's little daughter, on his shoulders across a swollen creek, and how the next day, when his father gave him a pony to show his pleasure over his son's chivalry, Marse Chan came walking home from school, having given his pony to Miss Anne. "'Yes,' sez ole marster, laughin', 'I s'pose you's already done giv' her yo'se'f, an' nex' thing I know you'll be givin' her this plantation and all my niggers.'" It was only a fortnight later that Colonel Chamberlin invited the "ole marster" and his whole family over to dinner, — expressly naming Marse Chan in the note, — and after dinner two ponies stood at the door, the one Marse Chan had given Miss Anne, and the other a present to Marse Chan from the Colonel. And after a "gre't" speech by the Colonel, the two young lovers went off to ride, while the "grown folks" laughed and chatted and smoked their cigars.

To the eye of Sam's endearing memory those were the good old times, — "de bes' Sam ever see! Dey wuz, in fac'! Niggers didn' hed nothin' 't all to do — jes' hed to 'ten' to de feedin' an' cleanin' de horses, an' doin' what de marster tell 'em to do; an' when dey wuz sick, dey had things sont 'em out de house, an' de same doctor come to see 'em whar 'ten' to de white folks when dey wuz po'ly. Dyar warn' no trouble nor nothin'."

The considerate affection shown for the young Sam by Marse Chan was illustrated by the little incident of the punishment inflicted on both of them by the "ole marster"

for sliding down the straw-stacks against orders. The master first whipped young Marse Chan and then began on Sam, who was using his lungs to lighten the severity of his punishment. Marse Chan took his own whipping without a murmur; "but soon ez he commence warmin' me an' I begin to holler, Marse Chan he bu'st out cryin', an' stept right in befo' old marster, an' ketchin' de whup, sed: —

"'Stop, seh! Yo' sha'n't whup 'im; he b'longs to me, an' ef you hit 'im another lick I'll set 'im free!' . . .

"Marse Chan he warn' mo'n eight years ole, an' dyah dey wuz — ole marster standin' wid he whup raised up, an' Marse Chan red an' cryin', hol'in' on to it, an' sayin' I b'longs to 'im.

"Ole marster, he raise' de whup, an' den he drapt it, an' broke out in a smile over he face, an' he chuck Marse Chan onder de chin, an' tu'n right roun' an' went away, laughin' to hisse'f; an' I heah 'im tellin' ole missis dat evenin', an' laughin' 'bout it."

Sam's vivid memory saw again the picture of the dawnlight on the river when Marse Chan and old Colonel Chamberlin fought their famous duel that grew out of the unfounded charges against Marse Chan's father made by the Colonel in a political speech. Sam could see again the early morning light on his young master's face, and could hear the ominous voice of one of the seconds saying, "Gentlemen, are you ready?"

"An' he sez, 'Fire, one, two' — an' ez he said 'one' ole Cun'l Chamb'lin raised he pistil an' shot right at Marse Chan. De ball went th'oo' his hat. I seen he hat sort o' settle on he head ez de bullit hit it, an' *he* jes' tilted his pistil up in de a'r an' shot — *bang;* an' ez de pistil went

bang, he sez to Cun'l Chamb'lin, 'I mek you a present to yo' fam'ly, seh!' . . .

"But ole Cun'l Chamb'lin he nuver did furgive Marse Chan, an' Miss Anne she got mad too. Wimmens is mons'us onreasonable nohow. Dey's jes' like a catfish: you can n' tek hole on 'em like udder folks, an' when you gits 'm yo' can n' always hole 'em."

In sympathetic and picturesque language the old darky recounted the last meeting between Marse Chan and Miss Anne, as they stood together in the moonlight, and Sam overheard the fateful words of the implacable Southern woman, "'But I don' love yo'.' (Jes' dem th'ee wuds!) De wuds fall right slow — like dirt falls out a spade on a coffin when yo's buryin' anybody, an' seys, 'Uth to uth.' Marse Chan he jes' let her hand drap, an' he stiddy hisse'f 'g'inst de gate-pos', an' he didn' speak torekly."

Sam's relation of how Marse Chan went to the war, of how in the tent he knocked down Mr. Ronny for speaking contemptuously of Colonel Chamberlin and his daughter, and of the effect on Marse Chan's face of the letter of reconciliation and love he received from Miss Anne, — brings the vivid narrative to Marse Chan's splendid charge on the field at the head of the regiment, carrying its fallen flag up the hill, and inspiring it by his dauntless leadership. "I seen 'im when he went, de sorrel four good lengths ahead o' ev'ry urr hoss, jes' like he use' to be in a fox-hunt, an' de whole rigimint right arfter him." But suddenly the sorrel came galloping back with flying mane, and the rein hanging down on one side to his knee, — and poor Sam knew that Marse Chan must be killed. He found his master among the dead men, still holding in his hand the flag as he lay beneath one of the guns. "I tu'n 'im over an'

call 'im, ' Marse Chan ! ' but 't wan' no use, he wuz done gone home, sho' 'nuff. I pick' 'im up in my arms wid de fleg still in he han's, an' toted 'im back jes' like I did dat day when he wuz a baby, an' ole marster gin 'im to me in my arms, an' sez he could trus' me, an' tell me to tek keer on 'im long ez he lived."

And when Sam reached home with the body in the ambulance and had gone over to let Miss Anne know the awful news, that " Marse Chan he done got he furlough," and she had ridden back and prostrated herself before Marse Chan's old mother, there is the close of the tragic story as told by the loyal old negro in these words : —

" Ole missis stood for 'bout a minit lookin' down at her, an' den she drapt down on de flo' by her, an' took her in bofe her arms.

" I couldn' see, I wuz cryin' so myse'f, an' ev'ybody wuz cryin'. But dey went in arfter a while in de parlor, an' shet de do' ; an' I heahd 'em say, Miss Anne she tuk de coffin in her arms an' kissed it, an' kissed Marse Chan, an' call 'im by his name, an' her darlin', an' ole missis lef' her cryin' in dyar tell some one on 'em went in, an' found her done faint on de flo'." And it was not long before Miss Anne, broken by nursing in the hospitals and by fever and sorrow, was laid beside the body of Marse Chan. So pathetic and brave and illuminating a story concerning the South at the beginning of the Civil War it would be difficult to find elsewhere in American literature.

In this collection of short stories " Unc' Edinburg's Drowndin' " is considered by Mr. Page himself as perhaps his best picture of old Virginia society ; and it does indeed present a variety of phases of the plantation and negro life, drawn with convincing art and a charming element of relieving humor.

"Ole Billy," peeling cedar fish-poles and introducing with loving detail his story of "Meh Lady," is a typical figure of the loyal, sympathetic, and humorous old house servant that Mr. Page delights to use, and somewhat idealizes, as the spokesman in his dialect stories of the South. Billy, in recalling the looks and ways of Meh Lady as a little girl, bent on following her ambitious brother, Marse Phil, said that she used to look "white 'mong dem urr chil'ns as a clump o' blackberry blossoms 'mong de blackberries. . . . An' her eyes! I do b'lieve she laugh mo' wid 'em 'n wid her mouf. She was de 'light o' dis plantation! When she'd come in you' house 'twuz like you'd shove back de winder an' let piece o' de sun in on de flo'— you could almos' see by her!" She and Marse Phil, Billy declared, were practically inseparable in all their pursuits until he went to college, and even till he went into the war. And then the old darky relates, with all the vivid detail of an eye-witness, how he started at dawn with the carriage and the "Mistis" and Meh Lady to drive to the battle-field where Marse Phil lay wounded unto death. "I see de soldiers all 'long de road look at me, an' some on 'em holler to me dat I cyarn' go dat way; but I ain't pay no 'tention to 'em, I jes' push on." Presently he saw in an oat field the house to which Marse Phil had been taken, and he was urging on the horses when three or four men standing in the roadway ahead, cried, "Halt." They cried "Halt" a second time, noticing that he paid no attention to them; and finally "a spreckle-face feller run up an' ketch Remus' head, an' anurr one done p'int he gun right at me." The old servant protested his surprise that they didn't have any better sense than to "ketch holt Mistis' horses," and was just on the point of using his whip on one of the men, when the door of the car-

riage opened and the "Mistis" stepped out. She told them that her son was dying in the house just beyond and she was going to him. "She talk mighty sorf' but mighty 'termined like. Dee sort o' reason wid her, but she jes' walk on by wid her head up, an' tell me to foller her, an' dat I did, mon! an' lef' 'em dyah in de road holdin' dee gun. De whole army couldn' 'a' keep her fum Marse Phil den." Marse Phil died that night in his mother's arms as peacefully as a baby, saying it was just like the old times when he used to go to sleep in her lap in his own room, with her arms around him. And the colonel of his regiment wrote Marse Phil's mother how the Confederacy mourned his loss, and how he was made a colonel on the day he was shot; and the proud negro added in his narrative that Marse Phil's new title of honor was on the tombstone and that one could still go into the garden and read it.

The panic among the darkies on the sudden advent of the Yankees; the insults of the irresponsible Northern soldiery; the protecting attitude of "Ole Billy" standing, ax in hand; the gallant entrance of Captain Wilton of the Northern army — though half Virginian and kinsman to Meh Lady; the typical unrelenting pride of Meh Lady and the "Mistis"; the captain's strenuous ride with a letter from General McClellan; the turning of the old Southern home into a hospital for Southern soldiers, with "Mistis" and Meh Lady as nurses; the bringing of the wounded Northern soldier to the house and tenderly nursing him back to life, his interesting convalescence and his unmistakable love for Meh Lady, with her reluctant refusal to marry him on the ground that she couldn't marry a Union soldier, — all come in as striking incidents in the development of the story. And the swift reduction of the "Mistis" and Meh Lady to extremest

poverty; the mortgaging of the plantation; the bitter surrender of Richmond and General Lee; the renewed effort of Colonel Wilton to be recognized as a lover; Billy's humorous purchase of the mule to help Meh Lady; her brave efforts at school teaching; and the fading out of her mother's life, — these continue the pathetic narrative to the terrible isolation of Meh Lady, and the final uncertain visit of the Northern suitor. Meh Lady's second refusal, old Hannah's message to the Colonel and her upbraiding him with being no "pertector to the chile," and the Colonel's taking of the reins into his own hands and insisting on an immediate marriage, carry us forward to his important ride to the court-house, with "Ole Billy" following on the collapsing mule. But alas! Billy's memory as to Meh Lady's age was all too misty. "I know her age, 'cause I right dyah when she born; but how ole she is, I don' know." It looked, under the circumstances, as if they would have to take a forty-mile ride back to the family records, when suddenly the old negro connected Meh Lady's birth with that of Marse Phil, a legal record of his words was made, the clerk of the court was able himself to confirm the truth of the negro's memory, and the necessary license was triumphantly carried back.

Such preparations that morning for the unexpected wedding! "Hannah she sut'n'y wuz comical, she ironin' an' sewin' dyah so induschus she oon' le' me come in meh own house." And when they were all ready for the ceremony, Hannah suddenly flung the door wide open, "An' Meh Lady walk out! Gord! ef I didn' think 'twuz a angel. She stan' dyah jes' white as snow fum her head to way back down on de flo' behine her, an' her veil done fall roun' her like white mist, an' some roses in her han'. Ef it didn'

look like de sun done come th'oo de chahmber do' wid her, an' blaze all over de styars, an' de Cun'l he look like she bline him. . . . An' dyah facin' Mistis' picture an' Marse Phil's (tooken when he wuz a little boy), lookin' down at 'em bofe, dee wuz married."

The point in the ceremony where the minister asks "Who gives this woman to this man?" seemed to the faithful darky to make some demand upon himself. "I don' know huccome 'twuz, but I think 'bout Marse Jeems an' Mistis when he ax me dat, an' Marse Phil, whar all dead, an' all de scufflin' we done been th'oo, an' how de chile ain' got no body to teck her part now 'sep jes' me; an' now when he wait an' look at me dat way, an' ax me dat, I 'bleeged to speak up; I jes' step for'ard an' say, 'Ole Billy.'"

"In Ole Virginia" is completed by the weird and haunting sketch of "No Haid Pawn," "Ole 'Stracted," and the delightful "Polly," — with its inimitable Colonel, — a charming kinsman of Hopkinson Smith's "Colonel Carter," — its Drinkwater Torm, who was always on the point of being sold the following morning, and the irresistible Polly herself, who knew so well the diplomatic uses of mint.

CHAPTER VII

"COLONEL CARTER OF CARTERSVILLE" BY F. HOPKINSON SMITH

THERE is probably no happier illustration of F. Hopkinson Smith's versatility as a story writer than that found in his "Colonel Carter of Cartersville," where he has drawn, with somewhat extravagant hand, perhaps, a Southern type of rare good fellowship, real bravery and chivalry, boundless hospitality, and delightfully visionary schemes. He belongs to that group of old-time Southern gentlemen so attractively portrayed by Thomas Nelson Page in "Marse Chan" "Meh Lady," and "Polly," and has already become a genial companion to a host of readers. And Chad — combination of cook, butler, body-servant, and boots — is a negro type that deserves to associate with Mr. Page's Sam and Billy and Torm.

The preparations for the Colonel's first dinner are significant of the Colonel's improvident but irresistible ways, — he wrote to his friend, the Major: "Will you lend me half a dozen napkins — mine are all in the wash, and I want enough to carry me over Sunday. Chad will bring, with your permission, the extra pair of andirons you spoke of." As the Major waited for his host's appearance, he was impressed by the cozy, charming interior of the Colonel's dining room, — an irregularly shaped apartment, panelled with a dark wood

running half way to the low ceiling, and containing two fireplaces — "an open wood fire which laughed at me from behind my own andirons, and an old-fashioned English grate set into the chimney with wide hobs — convenient and necessary for the various brews and mixtures for which the Colonel was famous." The Major also had time to notice the snow-white cloth resplendent in old India blue, the pair of silver coasters — heirlooms from Carter Hall — the silver candelabra with candles — as the Colonel despised gas — and some of the etchings and sketches from his own studio, which he had loaned to the appreciative Colonel. Suddenly he heard the Colonel calling down the back stairs: "Not a minute over eighteen, Chad. You ruined those ducks last Sunday." And the next moment he had his guest by the hand. "My dear Major, I am pa'alyzed to think I kep' you waitin'. . . . Have a drop of sherry and a dash of bitters, or shall we wait for Fitzpatrick? You don't know Fitz? Most extraord'nary man; a great mind, suh; literature, science, politics, finance, everything at his fingers' ends. . . . Put yo' body in that chair and yo' feet on the fender — my fire and yo' fender! No, Fitz's fender and yo' andirons! Charmin' combination!"

And to make the picture of this hospitable Southerner complete the Major gives this bit of description: "He is perhaps fifty years of age, tall and slightly built. His iron-gray hair is brushed straight back from his forehead, overlapping his collar behind. His eyes are deep-set and twinkling; nose prominent; cheeks slightly sunken; brow wide and high; and chin and jaw strong and marked. His mustache droops over a firm, well-cut mouth and unites at its ends with a gray goatee which rests on his shirt front.

"Like most Southerners living away from great cities, his

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"MY FIRE IS MY FRIEND."

From "Colonel Carter of Cartersville," by F. Hopkinson Smith. By permission of Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

voice is soft and low, and tempered with a cadence that is delicious.

"He wears a black broadcloth coat — a double-breasted garment — with similar colored waistcoat and trousers, a turn-down collar, a shirt of many plaits which is under-starched and over-wrinkled but always clean, large cuffs very much frayed, a narrow black or white tie, and low shoes with white cotton stockings."

This black broadcloth coat, by the way, the Colonel used to adapt to various functions: for a funeral or other serious matter on his mind the Colonel wore this coat buttoned close up under his chin, showing only the upper edge of his white collar and the stray end of a black cravat; for dinner he buttoned it lower down, revealing a bit of his plaited shirt; and for a wedding it was thrown wide open, discovering a stiff, starched, white waistcoat with ivory buttons and snowy neck-cloth.

As the Major incidentally remarks, the Colonel was "hospitable to the verge of beggary," enthusiastic as he was visionary, tender-hearted and happy as a boy, proud of his ancestry, his state, and himself, and an unswerving believer in states' rights, slavery, and the Confederacy; "and away down in the bottom of his soul still clinging to the belief that the poor white trash of the earth includes about everybody outside of Fairfax County." He was beyond the possibility of "reconstruction," and he chafed continually under what he believed to be the tyranny of "the Government," which latter term, however, really referred to the distribution of certain local offices in his own immediate vicinity.

Upon the belated arrival of the thick-set, round-faced Fitzpatrick, the Colonel sprang forward, seizing him by the shoulders, and exclaiming, "What the devil do you mean,

Fitz, by comin' ten minutes late? Don't you know, suh, that the burnin' of a canvasback is a crime? — Stuck in the snow? Well, I'll forgive you this once, but Chad won't. Give me yo' coat — bless me! it is as wet as a setter dog. . . . Major, Fitz! — Fitz, the Major! Take hold of each other." And then came the vigorous signal for dinner, — three raps on the floor with a poker, and a voice rumbled up from below: "Comin', sah!" And Chad dished the dinner. "To dine well was with him an inherited instinct. . . . To share with you his last crust was a part of his religion; to eat alone, a crime."

Immediately at the close of the next dinner given by the Colonel, he began the discussion with Fitzpatrick and the Major of his darling scheme of furnishing, by his proposed "Cartersville and Warrentown Air Line Railroad," an outlet to the sea for "the garden spot of Virginia," a plan for which he illustrated, — in lieu of the map which he had left at the office, — by the use at significant points of the mustard-pot, salt-cellar, cheese, and carving-knife. To the Major's practical inquiry as to the advantage of building twelve additional miles of road to reach Carter Hall, the Colonel rose to his feet in indignant reply: "Any advantage? Major, I am surprised at you! A place settled mo' than one hundred years ago, belongin' to one of the vehy fust fam'lies of Virginia, not to be of any advantage to a new enterprise like this! Why, suh, it will give an air of respectability to the whole thing that nothing else could ever do. Leave out Caarter Hall, suh, and you pa'alyze the whole scheme." The prospectus for the new railroad, which Fitz had somewhat modified to meet the requirements of business, seemed to the Colonel to be deficient in one respect, — it provided for no subscriptions in Cartersville, although they were to be

opened simultaneously in New York, London, and Richmond. To Fitzpatrick's innocent question as to whether there was any money in Cartersville, the Colonel proudly replied: "No, suh, not much; but we can *subscribe*, can't we? The name and influence of our leadin' citizens would give tone and dignity to any subscription list. Think of this, suh!" Another criticism of the document by the Colonel was due to Fitzpatrick's inserted phrase, "full protection guaranteed." When the Colonel was told that protection meant the right to foreclose the mortgage on the non-payment of interest, he authoritatively exclaimed: "Put yo' pencil through that line, quick — none of that for me. This fo'closure business has ruined haalf the gentlemen in our county, suh. But for that foolishness two thirds of our fust fam'lies would still be livin' in their homes. No, suh, strike it out!"

One of the Colonel's unique financial measures in connection with his great railroad scheme was the proposed issuance of Deferred Debentured Bonds. "No, gentlemen, the plan is not only fair, but reasonable. Two years is not a long period of time in which to foster a great enterprise like the C. & W. A. L. R. R., and it is for this purpose that I issue the Deferred Debentures. Deferred, — put off; Debenture — owed. What we owe we put off. Simple, easily understood, and honest." And when the Major and Fitz expressed a willingness to join him in subscribing for the fifty thousand founders' shares, the Colonel's exhilaration rose to an ecstatic point: "You overwhelm me, gentlemen," rising from his chair and seizing them by the hands. . . . "Fill yo' glasses and join me in a sentiment that is dear to me as my life, — 'The Garden Spot of Virginia in search of an Outlet to the Sea.'"

On one of the Major's calls, when the Colonel himself was unavoidably detained, Chad grew reminiscent of the good old days in Virginia when the Colonel's father, General John Carter, was alive, and when Chad's prospective wife, Henny, brought him perilously near trouble. Finding a goose roasting in the big oven, Henny cut off a leg and disappeared round the kitchen corner with the leg in her mouth. Horrified at what might happen when "Marse John" discovered at dinner the lack of the leg in the presence of "quality," Chad attempted to deny the fact that roast goose was intended for dinner and served everything else but that. When confronted with the evidence that he helped pick the goose, Chad reluctantly laid it down on the table with the one leg on the upper side. A young lady guest chose a goose leg instead of ham, and a gentleman guest asked for the other leg. "Major, you oughter seen ole Marsa lookin' for de udder leg ob dat goose! He rolled him ober on de dish, dis way an' dat way, an' den he jabbed dat ole bone-handled caarvin'-fork in him an' hel' him up ober de dish an' looked under him an' on top ob him, an' den he says, kinder sad like, 'Chad, where is de udder leg ob dat goose?' 'It didn't hab none,' say I. 'You mean ter say, Chad, dat de gooses on my plantation on'y got one leg?' 'Some ob 'em has an' some ob em ain't. You see, Marsa, we got two kinds in de pond, an' we was a little boddered to-day, so Mammy Jane cooked dis one 'cause I cotched it fust.'" Whereupon the master remarked ominously to Chad: "I'll settle with you after dinner." After dinner the master and his guests, accompanied by the trembling Chad, walked down to the duck-pond, and "dar was de gooses sittin' on a log in de middle of dat ole green goose-pond wid one leg stuck down — so — an' de udder tucked under

de wing." Chad called the attention of his master to the peculiar fact, while all the guests laughed. "'Stop, you black scoun'rel!' Marsa John says, his face gittin' white an' he a-jerkin' his handkerchief from his pocket. 'Shoo!'"— "Major, I hope to have my brains kicked out by a lame grasshopper if ebery one ob dem gooses didn't put down de udder foot!" With his cane uplifted to strike, the master angrily exclaimed, "You lyin' nigger, I'll show you," when Chad cried out, "'Stop, Marsa John! 't ain't fair, 't ain't fair.' 'Why ain't it fair?' says he. ''Cause,' says I, 'you didn't say "Shoo!" to de goose what was on de table.'" And the next day "Marsa John" told Chad he could have Henny for his wife.

Upon the belated arrival of the Colonel, he told the Major, with evident feeling in his voice, of all Chad's loyalty to the house of Carter. "Do you know, Major, that when I was a prisoner at City Point that darky tramped a hundred miles through the coast swamps to reach me, crossed both lines twice, hung around for three months for his chance, and has carried in his leg ever since the ball intended for me the night I escaped in his clothes, and he was shot in mine. I tell you, suh, the color of a man's skin don't make much diffe'ence sometimes. Chad was bawn a gentleman, and he'll never get over it."

Some of the Colonel's unique traits are illustrated in his buying roses for his Aunt Nancy, when she was considerately and secretly paying his grocery bills; in his drawing her a note of hand to relieve his sense of indebtedness and protect her against personal loss, in which he promises to pay on demand six hundred dollars, with interest at six per cent, "payable as soon as possible"; in his swift challenge of old Klutchem, the broker, for alluding to the Colonel's railroad

securities as not worth a yellow dog; in his sudden drawing of his will and bequeathing to his aunt, "Ann Carter, spinster," twenty-five thousand shares of "Cartersville and Warrentown Air Line Railroad" stock, — a railroad that was as yet only on paper and in the air; and in his cool attempt, as preparation for the duel, to snuff, at forty yards, a candle held by the confident Chad.

The prospective duel brought from Virginia, as a second for the Colonel, Major Tom Yancey of the Confederate army, whose personal appearance is described as that of "a short, oily-skinned, perpetually perspiring man of forty, with a décolleté collar, a double-breasted waistcoat with glass buttons, and skin-tight light trousers held down to a pair of high-heeled boots by leather straps. The space between his waistband and his waistcoat was made good by certain puckerings of his shirt, anxious to escape the thraldom of his suspenders." Unfortunately, the Colonel's challenge had failed to reach Mr. Klutchem, through lack of postage; and it was then diplomatically suggested by Fitzpatrick that the language used by the satirical Mr. Klutchem was really not insulting. Whereupon this dialogue ensued: "Did he call you a yaller dog?" said Yancey. "No." "Call anybody connected with you a yaller dog?" "Can't say that he did." "Call yo' railroad a yaller dog?" "No, don't think so," said the Colonel, now thoroughly confused and adrift. Yancey consulted with "Jedge" Kerfoot, his companion from the "district co'te of Fairfax County," and said gravely: "Unless some mo' direct insult is stated, Colonel, we must agree with yo' friend, Mr. Fitzpatrick, and consider yo' action hasty. Now, if you had pressed the gemman, and he had called *you* a yaller dog or a liar, somethin' might be done. Why didn't you press

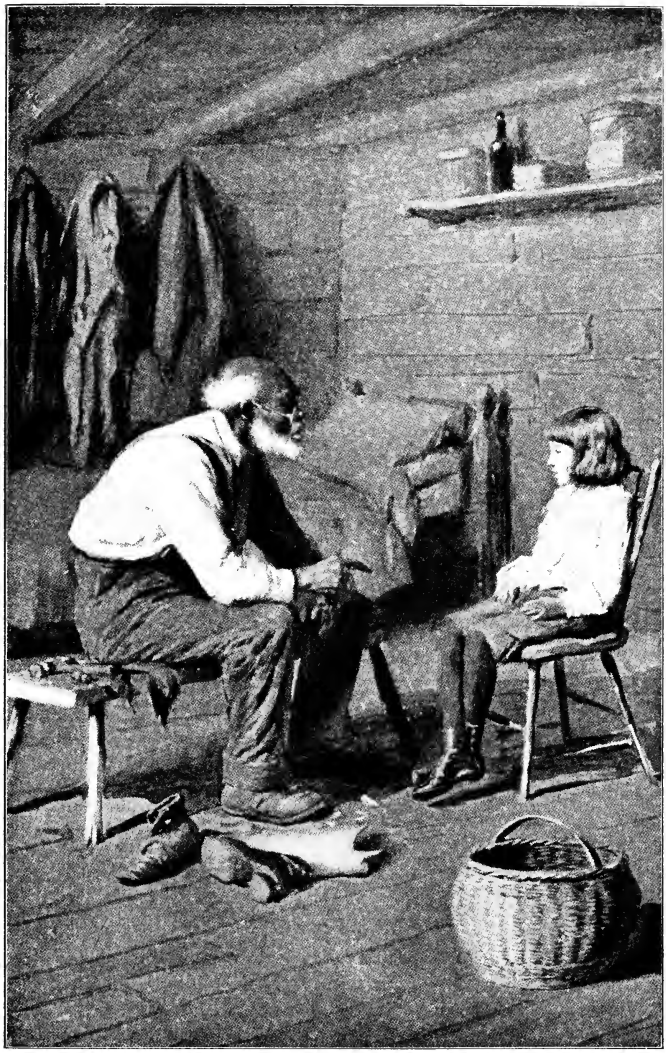
him?" "I did, suh. I told him his statements were false and his manners vulgar." "And he did not talk back?" "No, suh; on'y laughed." "Sneeringly, and in a way that sounded like 'Yo're another'?" The Colonel had to confess to the belligerent Yancey that he could not remember that it was. And "Jedge" Kerfoot formulated the general verdict: "The prisoner, Klutchem, is discharged with a reprimand, and the plaintiff, Caarter, leaves the co'te-room without a stain on his cha'acter. The co'te will now take a recess." And the "Jedge," the Major, and Fitzpatrick disappeared into an underground apartment where they slaked a true Southern thirst. However, for the poor Colonel, whose sense of what a gentleman should be was keen, it was now the only proper thing to call with Mr. Fitzpatrick upon Mr. Klutchem and make a formal apology for attempting to send a challenge on insufficient grounds for action.

When at last, on the unexpected sale of his coal land to the English syndicate, the Colonel actually became as rich in fact as he had been in hopes and the assurance of his optimistic nature, he was the same man in bearing, manner, and speech as he had been in his impecunious days in Bedford Place; the same in grateful generosity as he showed the faithful Chad the Englishman's check and told his old servant there was no more hard work for him; and the same in delightful chivalry as he rose at dinner and proposed the toast to Miss Nancy, "Fill yo' glasses, gentlemen, and drink to the health of that greatest of all blessings, — a true Southern lady!" Surely Cartersville lies in the "garden spot" of Virginia and the Colonel will always find an "outlet" for it in the interest of American readers.

CHAPTER VIII

"UNCLE REMUS: HIS SONGS AND HIS SAYINGS;" "MINGO, AND OTHER SKETCHES IN BLACK AND WHITE" BY JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS

DURING his earlier years as one of the editorial writers on the Atlanta *Constitution* Mr. Harris occasionally entertained the other members of the staff with his stories of plantation life; and it occurred to the editor of the paper that, if these could be put into literary form and published in the *Constitution,* they would make a popular journalistic feature. After much persuasion Mr. Harris wrote out some of the memories of his boyhood days in Putnam County, Georgia, and put them into the mouth of an old negro named "Uncle Remus." These sketches attracted wide interest, and in 1880 there was published in book form "Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings," — a book that disclosed to the world a unique character in fiction, and fixed the fame of the author not only in this country but also in England. "Uncle Remus" as a type of his race presents in Mr. Harris's work some of the more unusual phases of the negro character. As the author in his introduction to the book modestly remarks, "If the language of Uncle Remus fails to give vivid hints of the really poetic imagination of the negro; if it fails to embody the quaint and homely humor which was his most prominent characteristic; if it does not suggest a certain picturesque sensitiveness, a curious exaltation of mind and temperament not to be



"Brer Rabbit ain't see no peace w'atsumever."

(See page 63.)

From Uncle Remus. Copyright 1880, 1895, *by D. Appleton and Company*

defined by words, — then I have reproduced the form of the dialect merely, and not the essence, and my attempt may be accounted a failure." One certainly gets, in reading, the qualities Mr. Harris hopes to give, and also others, — such as the quaint superstitions, the peculiarly close sympathy with the weaker of the lower animals, which doubtless grew out of the negro's own dependent condition, and his prejudices connected with caste and pride of family. The little boy to whom Uncle Remus tells his legends is a product of the reconstruction that has quietly been going on in the South since the Civil War, while Uncle Remus himself is a surviving result of that social and political system which the war destroyed or greatly modified. And he is a survivor that has only pleasant memories of the time " befo' the wah."

It is significant to notice that in all the contests of subtlety and wit between " Brer Rabbit " on the one hand, and the bear, the wolf, and the fox on the other, the rabbit is almost uniformly successful, — the hero is the weakest and most harmless of animals. To use the words of Mr. Harris, " It is not virtue that triumphs, but helplessness ; it is not malice, but mischievousness." In other words, the negro's conception of " Brer Rabbit " seems to be a sort of allegory in which are reflected in a measure the relations of the black man to the dominant white race.

" Miss Sally," in search of her seven-year-old little boy, looked one evening through the window of Uncle Remus's cabin and saw the child's head resting against the old man's arm. His face was turned in intense interest up to the rough, weather-beaten face of Uncle Remus, who was telling him of the various wiles of Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox in their ceaseless contests with each other. They had exchanged

invitations to dinner, and Brer Rabbit in accepting the fox's invitation was approaching the latter's home when he heard groaning within. On opening the door Brer Rabbit found Brer Fox sitting up in a rocking-chair all wrapped up in flannel and looking "mighty weak." But he saw no dinner, — only a dish-pan, and close beside it a carving-knife. Brer Rabbit remarked that all signs pointed to chicken for dinner; and when Brer Fox assented, Brer Rabbit pulled his mustache and asked whether the fox had any calamus root. "I done got so now dat I can't eat no chicken' ceppin' she's seasoned up wid calamus root." And thereupon Brer Rabbit leaped out of the door and watched among the bushes for Brer Fox, who soon crept out of the house with his invalid's disguise gone and was preparing to close in on his reluctant guest. Suddenly Brer Rabbit cried out that he would just lay the fox's calamus root on a neighboring stump, and that the fox ought to get it while it was fresh, and then went leaping homeward. Uncle Remus's final comment was: "En Brer Fox ain't never kotch 'im yit. En wat's mo', honey, he ain't gwineter."

The fox's most successful stratagem with Brer Rabbit was the device of the "Tar-Baby," but even that was not entirely successful, — at least Uncle Remus leaves the little boy and the rest of us in doubt as to the final issue. Soon after the calamus root episode Brer Fox fixed up with tar and turpentine "a contrapshun" which he called a Tar-Baby. Putting it in the road, Brer Fox retired to the bushes to watch the effects. Soon there came pacing down the road Brer Rabbit — he came "lippity-clippity, clippity-lippity — dez ez sassy ez a jay-bird." Suddenly seeing the Tar-Baby, Brer Rabbit lifted himself on his "behime legs" in curious astonishment. "'Mawnin!' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee — 'nice wed-

der dis mawnin',' sezee. Tar-Baby ain't sayin' nothin', en Brer Fox, he lay low. 'How duz yo' sym'tums seem ter segashuate?' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee." But the Tar-Baby still "ain't sayin' nothin'," and Brer Rabbit offers to speak louder, if this strange little being is deaf. Growing indignant, the rabbit finally comes to the conclusion that the Tar-Baby is "stuck up" and threatens her: "Ef you don't take off dat hat en tell me howdy, I'm gwineter bus' you wide open." At last, all patience exhausted by repeated questionings, Brer Rabbit draws back and strikes the Tar-Baby with his fist. "Right dar's whaa he broke his merlasses jug." His fist clung to the Tar-Baby, and he couldn't pull it loose. "Ef you don't lemme loose, I'll knock you again," said Brer Rabbit, and with that he struck the Tar-Baby with his other hand, and that also stuck.

"Tu'n me loose, fo' I kick de nat'al stuffin' outen you," said the rabbit; but the Tar-Baby still "ain't sayin' nothin'," but just held on, and Brer Rabbit lost also the use of both his feet. "Den Brer Rabbit squall out dat ef de Tar-Baby don't tu'n 'im loose he butt 'er crank-sided. En den he butted, en his head got stuck." Whereupon Brer Fox, who has been lying low, saunters forth looking as innocent as "one er yo' mammy's mockin'-birds," and remarks genially: "Howdy, Brer Rabbit. You look sorter stuck up dis mawnin'." And then Brer Fox rolled on the ground and laughed and laughed, till he could laugh no more. "I speck you'll take dinner wid me dis time, Brer Rabbit. I done laid in some calamus root, en I ain't gwineter take no skuse," said the hilarious fox. But whether the fox ate the rabbit or not, Uncle Remus refused to tell the little boy, — "Dat's all de fur de tale goes;" and this autocratic ending was the signal for the little boy to "run 'long."

In half-soling one of his shoes Uncle Remus was much irritated by the little boy's persistent handling of his awls and hammers and knives; and this furnished the old negro a text for his tale about "The Awful Fate of Mr. Wolf." "Folks w'at's allers pesterin' people, en bodderin' 'longer dat w'at ain't dern, don't never come ter no good eend." And then the old darky proceeded to tell the story of the alliance of Brer Wolf with Brer Fox against Brer Rabbit, and how he "got kotch up wid — en he got kotch up wid monstus bad." The little boy's critical attitude of mind toward the past and present history of Brer Wolf proved too much for Uncle Remus's complacent egotism as a story-teller who could not be doubted, and he threateningly reminded the little fellow that his mother's voice would soon be calling him, and that his father might possibly bring up the rear "wid dat ar strop w'at I made fer 'im." The child laughingly shook his fist in the simple and serious face of the venerable old man, and then relapsed into an attitude of expectant interest.

It seems, according to Uncle Remus's narrative, that the wolf had torn down a straw house the rabbit had built, and also a house made of pine tops and one of bark, — and each time a child of Brer Rabbit's had been lost. Finally, Brer Rabbit built himself a house of plank, with rock foundations, and could then live in some sense of security.

One day, with the dogs hard after him, Brer Wolf took refuge in Brer Rabbit's house, and begged the latter for some place to hide in. The rabbit told him to get into a big chest that stood in the room, and when the wolf was inside and the hasp that held the cover down had been shoved into place, Brer Rabbit, in his exultation at having Mr. Wolf securely in his power, "went ter de lookin'-glass,

he did, en wink at hisse'f, en den he draw'd de rockin'-cheer in front er de fier, he did, and tuck a big chaw ter-barker."

Soon from the big chest came the anxious voice of Brer Wolf inquiring about the dogs, and Brer Rabbit informed him consolingly that he thought he had just heard one of them smelling round the chimney corner. Then Brer Rabbit filled a kettle with water and put it on the fire. "I'm fixin' ter make you a nice cup er tea, Brer Wolf." Next he proceeded to bore some holes in the cover of the big chest, to give, as he said, some chance to the wolf to get breath. Then Brer Rabbit increased the fire, with the purpose, as he told the wolf, of keeping him from getting cold. Brer Wolf, in his anxious curiosity to know what was going on, next inquired what Brer Rabbit was then engaged in. "I'm a tellin' my chilluns," calmly returned the rabbit, "w'at a nice man you is, Brer Wolf." "En de chilluns," Uncle Remus smilingly continued, "dey had ter put der han's on der moufs fer ter keep fum laffin'."

Then Brer Rabbit took the kettle and began to pour the boiling water through the holes in the cover of the chest, and this dialogue ensued: "W'at dat I feel, Brer Rabbit?" "You feels de fleas a bitin', Brer Wolf." "Dey er bitin' mighty hard, Brer Rabbit." "Tu'n over on de udder side, Brer Wolf." "W'at dat I feel now, Brer Rabbit?" "Still you feels de fleas, Brer Wolf." "Dey er eatin' me up, Brer Rabbit," — and these were the last words of Mr. Wolf, "kase de scaldin' water done de bizness." And Uncle Remus told the little boy, with a confirmatory touch of realism, that if he should go to Brer Rabbit's house he might still find Brer Wolf's hide "hangin' in de back po'ch, en all bekase he wuz so bizzy wid udder fo'kses doin's."

In "A Story of the War," largely told in the dialect of Uncle Remus, and also in his shrewd and humorous "Sayings," contained in the same volume, various aspects of the negro's peculiar character and mental habits are brought out with a quiet but telling art that readers have come to expect in Mr. Harris's writings.

Mr. Howells's suggestion that too exclusive a stress has been laid upon Mr. Harris's authentic portrayal of negro character, to the neglect of his sketches of Southern white types, brings to mind his story called "At Teague Poteet's," which is included in the volume entitled "Mingo, and Other Sketches in Black and White."

High up on Hog Mountain and overlooking Gullettsville, lay the fifty-acre farm of Teague Poteet, a Georgia "cracker"; and at the close of the Civil War, little Sis Poteet, his daughter, had grown old enough to need an education. But when her father suggested that it was time for her to become a lady by getting an education down in Gullettsville, Sis objected in very vigorous terms: "Pap, do you reckon I'm fool enough to traipse down to Gullettsville an' mix with them people, wearin' cloze like these? Do you reckon I'm fool enough to make myself the laughin'-stock for them folks?" And Teague was quick to see the point so emphatically made by his self-willed daughter. He took down his rifle, whistled up his dogs, and tramped skyward for game. Passing out through his horse-lot, he came accidentally upon the cap and worm of a whisky still, and turning the apparatus over with his foot, he remarked with a chuckle: "I'll thes about take you an' set up a calico factory. I'll heat you up an' make you spin silk an' split it into ribbens." And so whisky, in the strange movement of civilization, was to educate Sis Poteet.

Sis, having an unusual brightness of mind and a peculiar beauty of face and figure, became a great favorite at the academy in Gullettsville, and in time became as thoroughly educated as that somewhat limited institution could be expected to make her, for she was ambitious and improved her opportunities to the utmost. She rode from the Mountain to the Valley and from the Valley to the Mountain "in profound ignorance of the daily sensation she created among the young men of Gullettsville," to whom her beauty and unconscious grace were a sort of revelation. It was only when she met Philip Woodward, — a United States deputy marshal sent to arrange for a successful raid upon the moonshiners of Hog Mountain, who included among their number her own father, — that Sis began to know the attractions of a personal magnetism that belonged to a handsome, quick-witted, and adventurous young man familiar with the outside world. Woodward was staying in Gullettsville ostensibly to look up the title of a land-lot somewhere in the vicinity of Hog Mountain, which was practically all that remained of an inheritance swept away by the war. There was a tradition or rumor that the land-lot covered a vein of gold, and the desire to investigate this was a part of the young man's business, though strictly subordinate to his function as a deputy sheriff. This interest in the possibilities of his land-lot used to take young Woodward back and forth between Gullettsville and Hog Mountain, and what so natural in that informal region but that he should now and then meet Sis Poteet on her way to school. Sis was a surprise to him, in that region of social destitution, and her intelligence and wild beauty in some way won his heart. And here was a United States deputy sheriff paid to hunt down the moonshiners, and at the same time hopelessly in love with a

daughter of one of them! In this clash between the government and his heart, all he could do was to resign, but his resignation was not accepted.

In his advances as a wooer of Sis Poteet, Woodward soon found it necessary to drop all airs of patronage, — here was a woman of independent mind, frankness, and splendid freedom of life, — as the scholarly principal of the academy in Gullettsville once said, she was "superior to her books." In his despairing efforts to win her, he finally told her that he had failed to hunt up blockade whisky, that he had failed in his search for gold, and that even his resignation was a failure. At such disclosures Sis started up in a rage crying, "Oh, you mean, sneaking wretch!" and passed swiftly through the kitchen, seized a horn hanging on the wall, and ran out into the darkness. Suddenly were heard the notes of a horn, — short, sharp, and strenuous, — thrice repeated, and then a little later repeated three times again. And all the dwellers on Hog Mountain knew what it meant, — it was the notification that the moonshiners would soon be raided by the revenue men.

At the sound of the horn Teague Poteet, who owned two stills himself, was looking after some "doublings"; but all he did was to pause and listen and smile. Then he remarked, "Sis talks right out in meetin';" and added by way of explanation that the message of the horn was to the effect that the raiders would pass his own door. "An' I reckon in reason I oughter be home when they go past. They useter be a kinder coolness betweenst me an' them revenue fellers." In truth, the news of an approaching raid was like the taste of illicit whisky to these resolute men, — it had a sort of exhilarating effect, and meant perhaps a week of diversion in avoiding and fighting the government posse.

"Come, Tip," said Teague, "yess shet up shop." "Ef Sis ain't a caution," he said, a little later, as he moved about, putting things to rights. "Ef Sis ain't a caution, you kin shoot me. They hain't no mo' tellin' wher' Sis picked up 'bout thish 'ere raid than nothin' in the worl'. Dang me ef I don't b'lieve the gal's glad when a raid's a-comin'. Wi' Sis, hit's move*ment*, move*ment*, day in an' day out. They hain't nobody knows that gal less'n it's me. She knows how to keep things a-gwine."

And then the proud father indulged in some domestic reminiscence. "Sometimes she runs an' meets me, an' says, se' she: 'Pap, mammy's in the dumps; yess you an' me make out we er quollin'. Hit'll sorter stir 'er up'; an' then Sis, she'll light in, an' by the time we git in the house, she's a-scoldin' an' a-sassin' an' I'm a-cussin', an' airter awhile hit gits so hot an' natchul-like that I thes has ter drag Sis out behin' the chimbly and buss 'er to make certain an' shore that she ain't accidentually flew off the han'le. Bless your soul an' body! she's a caution!"

To the inquiry of Uncle Jake as to what Puss Poteet, the mother, was doing meanwhile, Teague replied with a laugh: "Oh, Puss! Puss, she thes sets thar a-chawin' away at 'er snuff, an' a-knittin' away at 'er socks tell she thinks I'm a-pushin' Sis too clost, an' then she blazes out an' blows me up. Airter that," Teague continued, "things gits more homelike. Ef 't wa'n't fer me an' Sis, I reckon Puss 'ud teetotally fret 'erself away." In wise comment Uncle Jake added, as he took another dram: "St. Paul — St. Paul says ther' er divers an' many wimmin, an' I reckon he know'd. Ther' er some you kin fret an' some you can't. Ther's my ole 'oman; more espeshually she's one you can't."

On the advice of Teague Poteet the ex-deputy, Woodward, who was spending the night at Poteet's, joined the band of moonshiners that were starting out to defy the sheriff's posse. He carried himself well and was protected from a quarrel by Teague himself. The posse was misled by the manufactured report of a Jewish peddler that Teague Poteet had been arrested and taken to Atlanta by a man named Woodward, and the posse hastened toward that city to share in the honor of the capture. On their way down the mountain one of their number recklessly shot a fifteen-year-old boy who was out squirrel-hunting, and this so enraged the mountaineers that when Woodward returned to Poteet's he was strongly advised to leave the region at once.

The effect on Sis of Woodward's sudden departure was a mystery to her father. She became variable in her moods, sometimes as gay as the birds in the trees, and sometimes taciturn and apparently depressed. As Teague described it, "One minnit hit's Sis, an' the nex' hit's some un else." He talked with his wife Puss about it, but got little consolation, for she felt that she was somewhat neglected in the attention given her attractive daughter. "It's Sis, Sis, Sis, all the time, an' eternally. Ef the calf's fat, the ole cow ain't got much choice betwixt the quogmire an' the tan-vat."

Sis once irrelevantly asked her father if he liked Mr. Woodward, and his reply had no uncertain sound: "Well, I tell you what, he had mighty takin' ways. Look in his eye, an' you wouldn't see no muddy water; an' he had grit. They hain't no two ways about that." All of his talks with Sis finally swung round to the subject of Woodward, and Teague began vaguely to suspect that possibly Woodward had wronged her. He went to Atlanta with a revolver in

his pocket, bent on finding out from Woodward himself the true condition of things. Woodward accidentally met him, took him to his room, and asked him in an embarrassed way if he thought his daughter would be willing to marry him. Whereupon, vastly relieved, the old mountaineer replied: "Lem me tell you the honest truth, Cap," placing his hand kindly on the young man's shoulder; "I might 'low she would, an' I might 'low she wouldn't; but I'm erbleege to tell you that I dunno nothin' 'bout that gal no more 'n ef I hadn't a-never seed 'er. Wimmin is mighty kuse." Some of Sis's actions were inexplicable, but finally she responded with all the strength of her nature to the manly love of Woodward. He was strongly in favor of a quiet wedding, but Teague had different views. "Why, good Lord, Cap!" he exclaimed, "what 'ud the boys say? Poteet's gal married an' no stools [invitations] give out! No, siree! Not much. We hain't that stripe up here, Cap. We hain't got no quality ways, but we allers puts on the pot when comp'ny comes. Me an' Sis an' Puss hain't had many weddin's 'mongst us, an' we're thes a-gwine to try an' put the bes' foot foremos'." When Hog Mountain heard the news, sent by special messenger with little pink missives written by Sis, it was as proud as Teague himself.

Certainly Sis and Puss and Teague, Mrs. Hightower and the bibulous Uncle Jake Norris, are a "peculiar people," but they have found in Mr. Harris an author who appreciates their qualities, and sees their deficiencies in a genial, humorous light.

CHAPTER IX

"THE GRANDISSIMES" BY GEORGE W. CABLE

MR. CABLE found in the influence of slavery and the caste spirit upon Creole life in New Orleans, at the opening of the last century, a virgin field that has yielded to American fiction a highly artistic and captivating book in "The Grandissimes." Notwithstanding a certain resentment on the part of the Creoles of the South against Mr. Cable's sometimes satirical but always sympathetic portrayal of their race, they should count themselves fortunate in having so skillful an artist and so fair a man to perpetuate in exquisite literary form such charming qualities as are found in types like Aurore and Clotilde and Honoré Grandissime; while Raoul Innerarity, Palmyre Philosophe, Clemence, and Agricola, though less distinctly individualized perhaps, are yet unique additions to our understanding of New Orleans life at the time of the French cession of Louisiana.

It was at the *bal masqué*, given for charity, in the Théâtre St. Philippe of New Orleans in the fall of 1803 that the beautiful Aurore Nancanou suddenly unmasked herself to Honoré Grandissime, on condition that before the following night he should pay into the hands of the managers two hundred and fifty dollars for sweet charity's sake. And Honoré was more than repaid, although he saw only a stranger, — the last of the great Creole family of De Grapion, the long-time

rivals to the Grandissimes. She was a young widow, living a secluded life of poverty in New Orleans with her daughter Clotilde, and he was the ablest and most progressive Creole in the famous family of the Grandissimes.

Aurore Nancanou and her daughter lived at No. 19 rue Bienville, in the right-hand half of a single-story, low-roofed tenement, washed with yellow ocher. The bedchamber of the cook was the kitchen and her bed the floor. The only other protector of the house was a hound, the aim of whose life was to get thrust out of the ladies' apartments every fifteen minutes. They were living in evident poverty, though neatness, order, and excellence were prevalent qualities in all the details of the interior. The furniture was old-fashioned, rich, French, and imported; the carpets, though not new, were not cheap; bits of crystal and silver, here and there, were as bright as they were antiquated; and the brasswork was brilliantly burnished. Their poverty was in a measure self-inflicted. Aurore's husband, in gambling with Agricola Fusilier, uncle of Honoré Grandissime, had staked and lost his whole plantation, including the slaves, and having accused Agricola of cheating and having been challenged to a duel, he fell dead at the first fire of Agricola's pistol. Agricola offered to restore the whole estate, slaves and all, if only the widow, Aurore, would sign a document to the effect that she believed the stakes had been fairly won. But her Creole pride refused,—that Creole pride of which Dr. Keene, Aurore's American physician, significantly said, as if making a diagnosis: "Show me any Creole, or any number of Creoles, in any sort of contest, and right down at the foundation of it all, I will find you this same preposterous, apathetic, fantastic, suicidal pride. It is as lethargic and ferocious as an alligator."

In the six months that Aurore and Clotilde had been living in their present abode it was not surprising that their neighbors had not been able to decide which was the fairer. "If some young enthusiast compares the daughter — in her eighteenth year — to a bursting blush rosebud full of promise, some older one immediately retorts that the other — in her thirty-fifth — is the red, red, full-blown, faultless joy of the garden. If one says the maiden has the dew of youth, — 'But!' cry two or three mothers in a breath, 'that other one, child, will never grow old. With her it will always be morning. That woman is going to last forever; ha-a-a-a! — even longer!'"

The reception of callers on Monday was always in Creole eyes an unfortunate event, to be guarded against only by smearing the front walk or "the banquette" with Venetian red. And this particular Monday the ominous caller on mother and daughter proved to be an errand-boy, who slipped a missive under the door. It read as follows: —

"New Orleans, 20 Feb're, 1804.

"Madame Nancanou: I muss oblige to ass you for rent of that house whare you living, it is at number 19 Bienville street whare I do not received thos rent from you not since tree mons and I demand you this is mabe thirteen time. And I give to you notice of 19 das writen in Anglish as the new law requi. That witch the law make necessare only for 15 das, and when you not pay me those rent in 19 das till the tense of Marh I will rekes you to move out. That witch make me to be very sorry. I have the honor to remain, Madam,

"Your humble servant,

"H. Grandissime,

"*per* Z. F."

The signature was supposedly that of the man to whom Aurore had laughingly unmasked at the ball for two hundred and fifty dollars to be paid to charity, but it was in reality that of his quadroon brother, the *rentier*, f. m. c. (free man of color). So that Aurore's tearful scorn on reading the letter was misdirected, though just as intense. "H. Grandissime! Loog ad 'im!" She held the letter out before her as if she were lifting something alive by the back of the neck, and to strengthen her indignation she used the hated English language enjoined by the new courts. "Loog ad 'im! dat ridge gen'leman oo give so mudge money to de 'ozpill!" "Bud, *maman*," suggested her daughter appeasingly, "*ee* do nod know 'ow we is poor." "Ah!" retorted Aurore, "*par example! Non?* Ee thingue we is ridge, eh? Ligue his oncle, eh? Ee thing so, too, eh?" She cast upon her daughter the withering look she intended for Agricola Fusilier, — the Grandissime who shot her husband in the duel and kept their estate, — and added scornfully, "You wan' to tague the pard of dose Grandissime?'" Clotilde, with a look of agony on her face, replied: "No, bud a man wad godd some 'ouses to rend, muz ee nod boun' to ged 'is rend?" Whereupon the mother ironically exclaimed: "Boun' to ged — ah! yez ee muz do 'is possible to ged 'is rend. Oh! certain*lee*. Ee is ridge, bud ee need a lill money, bad, bad. Fo' w'at?" And then Aurore rose to her feet excitedly and made a show of unfastening her dress for her daughter to carry off to satisfy the usurious demands of the Grandissimes. But the daughter's sudden tears brought the repentant mother to her knees; she drew her child's head into her bosom, and wept afresh. Then she told her daughter that she was going directly to Honoré Grandissime to demand justice; but instead she went

to consult Palmyre Philosophe, the worker of voudou charms.

The room which Aurora — to use Mr. Cable's preferred spelling — entered had furniture of a rude, heavy pattern, Creole-made; the lofty bedstead was spread and hung with a blue stuff showing through a web of white needlework. "The brazen feet of the chairs were brightly burnished, as were the brass mountings of the bedstead and the brass globes on the cold andirons. Curtains of blue and white hung at the single window. The floor, from habitual scrubbing with the common weed which politeness has to call *Helenium autumnale*, was stained a bright clean yellow. On it were here and there, in places, white mats woven of bleached palmetto leaf." There was besides a singular bit of fantastic carving, — a small table of dark mahogany supported on the upward-writhing images of three scaly serpents.

A dwarf Congo woman, black as soot, ushered in Aurora, who found Palmyre sitting beside this table. Though it was February, Palmyre was dressed in white. "That barbaric beauty which had begun to bud twenty years before was now in perfect bloom. The united grace and pride of her movement was inspiring, but — what shall we say? — feline? It was a femininity without humanity, — something that made her, with all her superbness, a creature that one would want to find chained." These two women had been children together on the De Grapion plantation, and their greeting was joyously cordial as they advanced toward each other, laughing and talking in their old-time French.

Aurora's pretended purpose in consulting the voudou worker of charms was to discover a means of getting her rent money; but Palmyre was quick to discover that the

fluttering little widow was really in love and wanted reassurance that her heart's desire might sometime be realized. The black dwarf brought in a little pound-cake and cordial, a tumbler half filled with the *sirop naturelle* of the cane sugar, and a small piece of candle of the kind made from the fragrant green wax of the candleberry myrtle. "These were set upon the small table, the bit of candle standing, lighted, in the tumbler of sirup, the cake on a plate, the cordial in a wine-glass." As Palmyre closed out all daylight from the room and received the offering of silver that "averted *guillons* (interferences of outside imps)" Aurora "went down upon her knees with her gaze fixed on the candle's flame, and silently called on Assonquer (the imp of good fortune) to cast his snare in her behalf around the mind and heart of — she knew not whom." When the flame rose clear and long it was a sign that the imp was on her side, but when it sputtered Aurora trembled. The end of the charred wick suddenly curled down and twisted away from the devotee, and her hope died down with it; but the tall figure of Palmyre intervened, the flame brightened into a cone, and once more the wick turned down, — but fortunately this time in the direction of Aurora. It finally fell through the exhausted wax and went out in the sirup. This was all; and then the charm worker handed Aurora some basil to hold between her lips as she walked homeward. To the departing and agitated little widow Palmyre Philosophe ominously exclaimed: "These things that *you* want, Momselle Aurore, are easy to bring. You have no charms working against you. But, oh! I wish to God I could work the *curse I* want to work!" Her blazing eyes, her heaving bosom, and her clenched hand lifted upward, reënforced her vengeful vow: "I would give this right hand

off at the wrist to catch Agricola Fusilier where I could work him a curse! But I shall; I shall some day be revenged!"

The most delightfully inconsequential and free-hearted character in the book is Raoul Innerarity, cousin of Honoré Grandissime, who suddenly appeared in the drug store of Joseph Frowenfeld, the immigrant, where various articles were wont to be left for sale. Behind him came a little black boy carrying a large rectangular package. Raoul is described as "a young, auburn-curled, blue-eyed man, whose adolescent buoyancy, as much as his delicate, silver-buckled feet and clothes of perfect fit, pronounced him all-pure Creole." Advancing like a schoolboy coming in after recess, Raoul announced to Mr. Frowenfeld: "I 'ave somet'ing beauteeful to place into yo' window." Tearing away the wrappings, he disclosed a painting, which he balanced at arm's length while he admired, and watched the effect on the proprietor of the pharmacy. Frowenfeld gazed long and silently, as if in dumb amazement, and then quietly asked: "What is it?" "Louisiana rif-using to hanter de h-Union!" replied the ecstatic Creole. Joseph silently wondered at Louisiana's anatomy, and then remarked that the subject was allegorical. "Allegoricon? No, sir! Allegoricon never saw that pigshoe. If you insist to know who make dat pigshoe — de hartis' stan' bif-ore you!" And Raoul, the proud, continued: "'Tis de work of me, Raoul Innerarity, cousin to de distingwish Honoré Grandissime. I swear to you, sir, on stack of Bible' as 'igh as yo' head!" When asked if he wanted the picture put into the window on sale, Raoul hesitatingly replied: "'Sieur Frowenfel', I think it is a foolishness to be too proud, eh? I want you to say, 'My frien', 'Sieur Innerarity, never care to sell anything; 'tis for egshibbyshun;' *mais* — when somebody

look at it, so," Raoul cast upon his work a look of languishing covetousness, "You say, '*foudre tonnere!* what de dev'! — I take dat ris-pon-sibble-ty — you can have her for two hun'red fifty dollah!' Better not be too proud, eh, 'Sieur Frowenfel'?"

Raoul then proceeded to show how thoroughly the artistic ideal had gotten hold of him by explaining that only a week before he was making out bills of lading for his cousin Honoré, "an' now I ham a hartis'! So soon I foun' dat, I say, 'Cousin Honoré . . . I never goin' to do anoder lick o' work so long I live; adieu.'" As an artist M. Raoul Innerarity was a crude specimen of laughable Creole egotism, but as a drug clerk for Mr. Joseph Frowenfeld, — a student of the community, — the irrepressible Creole was "a key, a lamp, a lexicon, a microscope, a tabulated statement, a book of heraldry, a city directory, a glass of wine, a Book of Days, a pair of wings, a comic almanac, a diving bell, a Creole *veritas*."

Mr. Joseph Frowenfeld's first call upon Aurora and Clotilde Nancanou discloses his own rational and equitable nature, while it serves to bring out as by a foil the deliciously amiable and scintillating qualities of the Creole mother and daughter, whom Mr. Cable has painted with so deft and loving a touch. The story of "Bras-Coupé," told simultaneously by Honoré Grandissime and Raoul Innerarity, is a series of pictures drawn in blood that present with startling effect the almost incredible horrors inherent in the savagery of slavery. It helps to account for the present uncanny and dangerous characteristics of Palmyre Philosophe, the weaver of voudou charms, and suggests causes that later may lead to the undoing of that pompous embodiment of unrelenting caste spirit, Agricola Fusilier.

The sensational end of Frowenfeld's effort to help the sick Dr. Keene, by caring for the wounded Palmyre, resulted in his finding, dramatically enough, Clotilde Nancanou waiting for him in his shop that she might make some arrangement to pay the next day's rent bill by the sale of her heaviest bracelet. His sudden appearance in the doorway, with the sweat of anguish on his brow and the matted blood on the back of his head, — the mark left by the billet of Palmyre's Congo dwarf — transformed the timid Creole woman into a brave nurse, who bathed his head with her own handkerchief, took him by the arm, and cried: "*Asseyez-vous, Monsieu'* — pliz to give you'sev de pens to see down, 'Sieu' Frowenfel'." Pressing back his forehead with a tremulous tenderness and wiping off the blood, she said, "Mague yo' 'ead back. . . . W'ere you is 'urted?" Raoul's uncomfortable question as to where Frowenfeld had left his hat brought out a general defense of himself by the apothecary, in which he despairingly protested his innocence, reaching out both his hands and quite losing his customary self-control. "'Sieu' Frowenfel'!" impulsively exclaimed Clotilde, the tears springing to her eyes, "I am shoe of it!" But realizing that in this case the truth only would seem incredible, the wounded man gave way to the hopelessness of the situation until Clotilde revived him by a glass of water, and by the heroic and confident assertion: "'Sieu' Frowenfel', you har a hinnocen' man! Go, hopen yo' do's an' stan' juz as you har ub biffo dad crowd and sesso!" Suddenly recovering the full stature of his manhood, Frowenfeld called a blessing on her and a reward from God: "You believe in me, and you do not even know me." But saying more than she meant to reveal, and blushing violently at her own words, Clotilde answered: "*Mais,* I does know you

— betteh'n you know annyt'in' 'boud it!" And Frowenfeld started at this delightful revelation of her secret love.

Even the cynical and abrupt Dr. Keene used to remark that Clemence — the old negress that sold *calas* and secretly carried voudou charms for the Philosophe — was a thinker. It was revealed both in the cunning aptness of her songs and in the droll wisdom of her sayings; and her shrewd observations on the condition of the black race under slavery and the Creole attitude toward it are something of an index, doubtless, to Mr. Cable's own views concerning slavery and the caste spirit which have, directly and indirectly, so large a place in the book.

Once, in the course of chaffering over the price of *calas*, Dr. Keene proclaimed the old current conviction, which is still sometimes heard expressed, that the slaves were "the happiest people under the sun." To which Clemence was bold enough to make indignant denial, and was told in retort that she had "promulgated a falsehood of magnitude." "W'y, Mawse Chawlie," she replied, "does you s'pose one po' nigga kin tell a big lie? No, sah! But w'en de whole people tell w'at ain' so — if dey know it, aw if dey don' know it — den dat *is* a big lie!"

Asked if she charged white people with lying, Clemence pretended to make this defense of the whites: "Oh, sakes, Mawse Chawlie, no! De people don't mek up dat ah; de debble pass it on 'em. Don' you know de debble ah de grett cyount'feiteh? Ev'y piece o' money he mek he tek an' put some debblemen' on de under side, an' one o' his pootiess lies on top; an' 'e gilt dat lie, and e' rub dat lie on 'is elbow, an' 'e shine dat lie, an' 'e put 'is bess licks on dat lie; entel ev'ybody say, 'Oh, how pooty!' An' dey tek it fo' good money, yass — and pass it! Dey b'lieb it!"

The quizzing remark of a bystander, to the effect that the "niggers" didn't know when they were happy, called out the retort on the part of Clemence, "Dass so, Mawse — *c'est vrai, oui!* we donno no mo'n white folks!" This naturally won the laugh against the speaker; and when Clemence naïvely asked the doctor whether all "niggas" were free in Europe, and he replied that something like that was true, the shrewd negress observed: "Well now, Mawse Chawlie, I gwan t' ass you a riddle. If dat is *so*, den fo' w'y I yeh folks bragg'n 'bout de 'stayt o' s'iety in Eu'ope'?"

Making a gesture of attention she continued: "D'y' ebber yeh w'at de cya'ge-hoss say w'en 'e see de cyaht-hoss tu'n loose in de sem pawstu'e wid he, an' knowed dat some'ow de cyaht gotteh be haul'? W'y 'e jiz snawt an' kick up 'is heel'" — she suited the action to the word — "an' tah' roun' de fiel' an' prance up to de fence an' say, 'Whoopy! shoo! shoo! dis yeh country gittin' *too* free!'" Another laugh on the part of the onlookers, and Clemence resumed: "Oh, white folks is werry kine. Dey wants us to b'lieb we happy — dey *wants to b'lieb* we is. W'y, you know, dey 'bleeged to b'lieb it — fo' dey own cyumfut. 'Tis de sem weh wid de preache's; dey buil' we ow own sep'ate meet'n'-houses; dey b'leebs us lak it de bess, an' dey *knows* dey lak it de bess."

Such speeches as these, though smiled at, were not entirely forgotten by the more prejudiced element among the Creoles, and when later poor Clemence was caught at night in a trap and made to confess at the mouth of a pistol the sender of voudou charms, her often expressed views had not a little influence in determining her awful fate.

Events like Honoré Grandissime's heroic restitution to Aurore and Clotilde of the Nancanou estate that had come

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to his uncle Agricola as the result of a gambling contest, and his still more difficult defiance of the implacable Grandissime caste spirit in recognizing his less-white half-brother and admitting him into the business under the new firm-name of "Grandissime Brothers," — such revolutionary things had happened in the absence of Dr. Keene in the West Indies in search of health. Fortunately for him, Raoul Innerarity, artist and new bridegroom, in his impatience to get back to his wife, boarded the schooner bearing the doctor to New Orleans, and became without effort newspaper and local gossip. Raoul's first words were: "My cousin Honoré, — well you kin jus' say 'e bitray' 'is 'ole fam'ly." And when asked to explain so strong and startling a statement, Raoul indignantly continued: "Well, — ce't'nly 'e did! Di'n' 'e gave dat money to Aurora de Grapion? — one 'undred five t'ousan' dolla'? Jis' as if to say, 'Yeh's de money my h-uncle stole from you' 'usban'.' Hah! w'en I will swear on a stack of Bible' as 'igh as yo' head, dat Agricole win dat 'abitation fair! — If I see it? No, sir; I don't 'ave to see it! I'll swear to it! Hah!" And Raoul added the surprising statement that the receivers of all this money were "livin' in de rue Royale in mag-*niff*ycen' style on top de drug-sto' of Profis-or Frowenfel'." "An listen! You think Honoré di'n' bitrayed 'is family? Madame Nancanou an' heh daughtah livin' upstair' an' rissy-ving de finess soci'ty in de Province! — an *me?* — down-stair' meckin' pill'! You call dat justice?" Ignoring the doctor's inquiry as to whether Honoré and Frowenfeld were callers in the new quarters, the prejudiced Creole addressed a question of his own: "Doctah Keene, I hask you now, plain, don' you find dat mighty disgressful to do dat way, lak Honoré?" And at the doctor's expression of ignorance as to the way, the

excited Raoul asked: "W'at? You dunno? You don' yeh 'ow 'e gone partner' wid a nigga? . . . Yesseh! 'e gone partner' wid dat quadroon w'at call 'imself Honoré Grandissime, seh!" "What do the family say to that?" "But w'at *can* dey say? It save dem from ruin! At de sem time, me, I think it is a disgress. Not dat he h-use de money, but it is dat name w'at 'e give de h-establismen' — Grandissime Frères! H-only for 'is money we would 'ave catch' dat quadroon gen'leman an' put some tar and fedder. Grandissime Frères! Agricole don' spik to my cousin Honoré no mo'."

After the capture of Clemence, the voudou agent of Palmyre, and the ruling of Agricola out of the council of vengeance, this fierce and irrational embodiment of caste spirit, carrying in one hand his screed on the "Insanity of Educating the Masses," and in the other hand a staff, set out for Frowenfeld's pharmacy. While Agricola was there in conversation with the proprietor, who should walk in for a prescription but Honoré Grandissime f. m. c. (free man of color). Agricola's wrathful demand that Frowenfeld should turn that negro out, was followed by another, made directly to the quadroon himself, to take off his hat. The quadroon slowly slipped his thin right hand into his bosom and replied in his soft, low voice, "I wear my hat on my head." Whereupon the furious Agricola struck the quadroon on the head with his staff, and before the onlookers could interfere the men had grappled and fallen, the quadroon beneath. Suddenly from below a long knife was lifted and thrust three times into the old Agricola's back. He was carried upstairs to the apartments of Aurora and Clotilde, the wife and child of his old enemy, and there with his dying words he exclaimed against the new régime — the *Américain* in Louisi-

ana. "Your Yankee government is a failure, Honoré, a drivelling failure. It may live a year or two, not longer. Truth will triumph. The old Louisiana will rise again. She will get back her trampled rights. When she does, remem—" but his voice suddenly failed. Addressing himself later to Frowenfeld, he falteringly said: "Beware, my son, of the doctrine of equal rights — a bottomless iniquity. Master and man — arch and pier — arch above — pier below. . . . Society has pyramids to build which make menials a necessity, and Nature furnishes the menials all in dark uniform." His last act, most unexpected and dramatic of all, was to unite with his waning strength the hands of his nephew, Honoré Grandissime, with those of Aurora de Grapion, saying as he did so that he had pledged this union to Aurora's father twenty years before. His last words — and they were appropriately put upon his tomb — were, "Louisian — a —for — ever!"

But a deathbed union, such as that performed by Agricola Fusilier, was not binding in the eyes of Aurora Nancanou; and although her love for Honoré Grandissime was beyond doubt in her own mind, she feared that he was merely carrying out the wish of his dying uncle. "An' w'en someboddie git'n ti'ed livin' wid 'imsev an' big'n to fill ole, an' wan' someboddie to teg de care of 'im an' wan' me to gid marri'd wid 'im — I thing 'e's in love wid me." And this love seems to the little Creole widow — who is living at the advanced age of thirty-five — to bring back her youth. "Some day', 'Sieur Grandissime, — id mague me fo'gid my hage! I thing I'm young!" She has "so mudge troub' wit dad hawt" of hers that it seems at times to herself that she is "crezzy" and that she "muz be go'n' to die torecklie." She feels that in some way Honoré is under obligation to

marry her: "You know, 'Sieur Grandissime, id woon be righd! Id woon be juztiz to *you!* An' you de bez man I evva know in my life, 'Sieur Grandissime!" But finally, after his long and ardent persistency, filled with tormenting doubt, and even with a repeated "no" upon her wayward lips, she bursts into tears and laughter, and allows her splendid suitor, head of a hostile house, to take her in his arms. And all the world rejoices in this dramatic union of beautiful love and high romance.

CHAPTER X

"THE PROPHET OF THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS" BY "CHARLES EGBERT CRADDOCK"

When Thomas Bailey Aldrich, then editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, invited Oliver Wendell Holmes and William Dean Howells to dine with "Charles Egbert Craddock," there was a novel running serially in the *Atlantic* under the title of "The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains." The virility of the work, as well as that of the preceding short stories collected under the head of "In the Tennessee Mountains," had apparently marked the owner of the pseudonym as undoubtedly a man. There was, too, a certain legal acumen displayed in some of the stories which might belong to a lawyer who had turned to literature for recreation. And then there was the bold, manly handwriting of the heavily inked manuscripts, which once led Mr. Aldrich to remark, "I wonder if Craddock has laid in his winter's ink yet; perhaps I can get a serial out of him." "Mr." Craddock proved to be Miss Murfree, and the serial was realized in "The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains."

There is little cause for wonderment that for six years Miss Murfree's identity was unknown — such intimate knowledge of the pent-up, ignorant, law-defying, hard-headed mountaineers of Tennessee must argue a man's life among the mountains themselves as the only means of obtaining such unique literary material. In reality, Miss Murfree's

family had been in the habit of spending their summers in the Tennessee mountains, and with her keenness of observation, her swift insight into character, and her poetic sensibility Miss Murfree was able to portray her strange types and their impressive environment with truth and picturesque effect.

Above Dorinda Cayce, as she plowed with her one ox down the corn-rows, rolled the mists and vapors of the Great Smoky Mountains, amid which, at times, the "Prophet" used to take refuge and wrestle in prayer for his own soul. Dorinda, the daughter of the old moonshiner, "Ground-hog" Cayce, was being helped in her plowing by her ardent lover, Rick Tyler, — at that time a hunted outlaw with a price upon his head. In their intermittent conversation, Dorinda suddenly remarked, referring to Parson Kelsey, the "Prophet": "He 'lowed ter me ez he have been gin ter view strange sights a many a time in them fogs, an' sech." Presently, turning her eyes on her lover, who was plowing with his horse near by, she leaned lightly on the plow-handles and continued: "I 'lowed ter him ez mebbe he hed drempt them visions. I knows I hev thunk some toler'ble cur'ous thoughts myself, ef I war tired an' sleepin' hard. But he said he reckoned I hed drempt no sech dreams ez his'n. I can't holp sorrowin' fur him some. He 'lowed ez Satan hev hunted him like a pa'tridge on the mounting."

Rick, the lover, was somewhat jealous of the Prophet, who, as Dorinda said, stopped to rest occasionally at the Cayces' on his way down from "the bald," where he went to pray. "In the name o' reason," exclaimed the young lover petulantly, "why can't he pray somewhar' else? A man ez hev got ter h'ist hisself on the bald of a mounting ten mile

high — except what's lackin' — to git a purchase on prayer hain't got no religion wuth talkin' 'bout. Sinner ez I am, I kin pray in the valley — way down yander in Tuckaleechee Cove — ez peart ez on enny bald in the Big Smoky."

But soon, catching the sound of a horse's hoof striking on a stone far down the mountain road, Rick swiftly saddled his horse, from which Dorinda had deftly taken the plow-gear, and disappeared in the dense laurel that screened the mountain fastnesses.

Dorinda, at twilight time, was hunting for the vagrant cow and now and then calling "soo-cow! soo!" when she heard a sound alien to the echoes of her own cry. Now and again from the great "bald" above her came the appealing, tempestuous tones of the Prophet, and Dorinda said, with a sort of pity in her voice, "He hev fairly beset the throne o' grace!" As she passed along singing, she came suddenly, a little later, upon the Prophet himself, standing by his yoke of weary oxen, which he was allowing a few moments of rest after a hard day of plowing. The Prophet was of medium height, "slender but sinewy, dressed in brown jeans, his trousers thrust into the legs of his boots, a rifle on his shoulder, and a broad-brimmed old wool hat surmounting his dark hair, that hung down to the collar of his coat." His eyes had a peculiar luster of fire or inspiration or frenzy, — in strange contrast to his otherwise dullard aspect. Dorinda asked solemnly as to how the moral vineyard was thriving, and then remarked encouragingly, "I hearn tell ez thar war a right smart passel o' folks baptized over yander in Scolacutta River." The Prophet replied that he had baptized fourteen, and Dorinda exclaimed, "They hed all fund grace!" "They 'lowed so," returned the parson. "I hopes they'll prove it by thar works." Asked by Dorinda

if he had been praying for them on "the bald," he answered, "Naw, I war a-prayin' for myself."

Upon these two in strange dialogue came riding Gid Fletcher, the blacksmith, bringing the news of the capture of Rick Tyler while he was attempting to buy powder at the Settlement. The news made the trees unsteady before the eyes of Dorinda, and the stars became a circle of dazzling gleams. She caught at the yoke, leaned against one of the oxen, and bent every sense into the act of listening. Suddenly there came a change in Parson Kelsey's manner. His fiery eyes turned upon the blacksmith, his face was transformed with light and life, his figure grew erect and tense, and he stretched forth an accusing gesture. "'Twar youuns, Gid Fletcher, ez tuk the boy!" This in the minds of the blacksmith and Dorinda was only another confirmation of the parson's power in the mysterious matter of abnormal foreknowledge. And when the blacksmith, with rising blood, inquired why the Prophet should think it was he rather than others that had effected the treacherous capture, the mind-reader fearlessly responded: "Yer heart air ez hard ez yer anvil, Gid Fletcher. Thar ain't another man on the Big Smoky ez would stir himself ter gin over ter the gallus or the pen'tiary the frien' ez trested him, who hev done no harm, but hev got tangled in a twist of a unjest law."

The blacksmith's exonerating suggestion that the governor of Tennessee had offered a reward of two hundred dollars for Rick's capture called out the uncompromising comment of the parson, "Blood money." The blacksmith's insistence that the earning of the reward was lawful prompted the fierce exclamation of the Prophet: "Lawful! Judas war a law-abidin' citizen. He mos' lawfully

betrayed *his* Frien' ter the law. Them thirty pieces o' silver! Sech currency ain't out o' circulation yit!"

Quick as a flash the blacksmith's heavy hand struck the Prophet in the face, but the next moment his anger was plunged into fear; for there stood the assaulted and outraged man with a loaded rifle in his hands, and the lightnings of heaven flashing in his eyes. But hardly had the blacksmith time to draw the breath he thought would be his last, when the Prophet turned to him the other cheek, and said, with all the dignity of his calling, "In the name of the Master."

As the blacksmith rode away, he felt that the parson's rifle-ball would have been better than his own loss of moral and spiritual reputation, for in the Big Smoky, piety, or its simulacrum, was the point of honor. What an illustration of iniquity he would furnish for the parson's sermons, what a text! The blacksmith, cast down and indignant, pondered on his homeward way the uncomfortable situation in these words: "Fur Hi Kelsey ter be a-puttin' up sech a pious mouth, an' a-turnin' the t'other cheek, an' sech, ter me, ez hev seen him hold his own ez stiff in a many a free-handed fight, an' hev drawed his shootin'-irons on folks agin an' agin! An' he fairly tuk the dep'ty, at that thar disturbamint at the meet'n'-house, by the scruff o' the neck, an' shuck him ez ef he hed been a rat or suthin', an' drapped him out'n the door. An' now ter be a-turnin' the t'other cheek!"

The parson's fearless interruption of the gander-pulling sport, his uncompromising prediction of 'Cajah Green's failure to be reëlected, and the mysterious escape of Rick Tyler, with which the parson's cöoperation was vaguely hinted at, bring us to the time when the parson, riding along the

valley road and looking up at the mountain heights, was lifted into a sort of spiritual exaltation by the thought that "on a mountain the ark rested; on a mountain the cross was planted; the steeps beheld the glories of the transfiguration; the lofty solitudes heard the prayers of Christ; and from the heights issued the great sermon instinct with all the moralities of every creed." But this mood of special exaltation, in which he was almost happy, was miserably broken as he rode along reading his Bible, by the unconscious flattery of a roadside mountaineer, who cried out in the fervor of his admiration, "Kin ye read yer book, pa'son, an' ride yer beastis all ter wunst?" Alas! "that tree of knowledge, — ah, the wily serpent! Galilee, — it was thousands of miles away across the deep salt seas."

Closing his book with an exulting smile of pride in his own superior achievement, he said: "The beast don't hender me none. I kin read ennywhar." Whereupon the admiring mountaineer declared his intention of taking the whole family the following Sunday to hear the parson's sermon. "I 'low ez a man what kin ride a beastis an' read a book all ter wunst mus' be a powerful exhorter, an' mebbe ye'll lead us all ter grace."

The Prophet's momentary pleasure in this admiration and unconscious flattery fled before the sense of his own vanity and unworthiness. "He remembered Peter, the impetuous, and Thomas, the doubter, and the warm generosities of the heart of him whom Jesus loved, and he 'reckoned' that they would not have left Him standing in the road for the joy of hearing their learning praised." "The Lord lifts me up," he said, "ter dash me on the groun'!"

The afternoon of the same day he reached the house of the Cayces on the slope of the mountain, and being asked

by the old woman to stop and "rest his bones," he tarried awhile in conversation with Dorinda and her mother. To the latter's question, "Be you-uns a-goin' ter hold fo'th or Brother Jake Tobin?" the parson replied: "It air me ez air a-goin' ter preach." Whereupon the old woman promptly declared: "Then I'm a-comin'. It do me good ter hear you-uns fairly make the sinners spin. Sech a gift o' speech ye hev got! I fairly see hell when ye talk o' thar doom. I see wrath an' I smell brimstone. Lord be thanked, I hev fund peace! An' I'm jes' a-waitin' fur the good day ter come when the Lord'll rescue me from yearth!" Unfortunately her daughter Dorinda, as the mother told the parson, was not yet "convicted," and the old woman demanded of him: "Why n't ye speak the truth ter her, pa'son? Fix her sins on her." "Sometimes," responded the parson in strange depression, "I dunno ef I hev enny call ter say a word. I hev preached ter others, an' I'm like ter be a castaway myself."

In the little log meeting-house at the Notch on the following Sunday, after a long preliminary service by the unctuous Brother Jake Tobin and a labored prayer by Brother Reuben Bates, Parson Kelsey stepped forward to the table and opened the book, while the congregation expectantly composed itself to listen to the sermon. He turned the leaves of the New Testament for a text, but suddenly into his mind came skulking a "grewsome company of doubts. In double file they came: fate and free agency, free will and foreordination, infinite mercy and infinite justice, God's loving-kindness and man's intolerable misery, redemption and damnation." They proved too strong for this crudely logical, morbidly conscientious mountain preacher — the very opposite type from Edward Eggleston's Mr. Bosaw — and

he closed the Bible with a sudden impulse and the galvanic announcement, "My frien's, I stan' not hyar ter preach ter-day, but fur confession." Amid the intense silence following the announcement, he agonizingly cried out: "I hev los' my faith! God ez gin it — ef thar is a God — hev tuk it away. You-uns kin go on. You-uns kin b'lieve. Yer paster b'lieves, an' he'll lead ye ter grace, — leastwise ter a better life. But fur me thar's the nethermost depths of hell, ef — ef thar be enny hell." At the rising protest of Parson Tobin, the Prophet lifted his hand in deprecation — "bear with me a little; ye'll see me hyar no more. Fur me thar is shame, ah! an' trial, ah! an' doubt, ah! an' despair, ah! . . . My name is ter be a by-word an' a reproach 'mongst ye. . . . An' I hev hed trials, — none like them ez air comin', comin', down the wind."

He stood erect, he looked bold and youthful, and in his eyes shone the strange light that always marked his inspiration or frenzy. "I will go forth from 'mongst ye, — I that am not of ye. Another shall gird me an' carry me where I would not. Hell an' the devil hev prevailed agin me. Pray fur me, brethren, ez I cannot pray fur myself. Pray that God may yet speak ter me, — speak from out o' the whirlwind."

There was a sound upon the air, a thrill ran through the horrified congregation, galloping hoof-beats came nearer, the sheriff strode up the aisle and laid his hand upon the preacher's shoulder, and the Prophet was under arrest in his own pulpit! Self-convicted of the blasphemy of infidelity and arrested as a culprit before the law! He was accused of having rescued Rick Tyler from the hands of the law, and in his utter innocence he cried in a tense voice, "I never rescued Rick Tyler!" Brother Jake Tobin consolingly

remarked, " Yer sins hev surely fund ye out, Brother Kelsey," while the Prophet, with a fierce inward struggle, allowed himself to be led away from among them.

Despite the efforts of Dorinda Cayce to persuade her jealous lover, Rick Tyler, — who had been exonorated of his alleged crime, — to testify in behalf of Parson Kelsey, or even to have his testimony put in the form of an affidavit, to the effect that Rick was his own rescuer, the innocent parson was brought to trial. The judge strongly charged the jury in favor of the defendant, and, after the verdict of acquittal, stated indignantly that there had been practically no evidence against the parson, and that the whole case was one of flagrant malice. Gid Fletcher, the blacksmith, who was a witness at the trial, reported that the Prophet had risen and reviled both himself and 'Cajah Green, the sheriff, in open court. " 'Pears like he hed read the Bible so constant jes' ter l'arn ev'ry creepy soundin' curse ez could be called down on the heads o' men."

With the return of Parson Kelsey to the Big Smoky came a snow-storm, covering the ground with a thick whiteness. As he trudged along up the mountain he came to the log-cabin of old Ground-hog Cayce, whose still had been destroyed through information furnished by 'Cajah Green, the ex-sheriff. Knocking at the door, the Prophet was admitted to a circle of alert, expectant men, — Cayce and his stalwart sons. Kelsey noted their aspect of repressed excitement and how uneasily they shifted their chairs, which grated harshly on the puncheon floor. The conversation finally ran upon 'Cajah Green and the destruction wrought in the cave where the Cayces' illicit still had stood. One of the sons suddenly turned to Kelsey and asked, " Ye w'wants him shot, hey, pa'son?" And with flashing eye Kelsey

replied, "I pray that the Lord may cut him off." The parson was thinking of his arrest by Green and of his unjust trial due to the malevolence of the same man. But when he fully realized that the moonshiners were really bent on murdering the ex-sheriff, his mind changed into compassion and into horror at the thought of such cold-blooded crime. Lifting his hand suddenly, with an imperative gesture, and with the old-time religious light in his eyes, the Prophet exclaimed: "Listen ter me! Ye'll repent o' yer deeds this night! An' the jedgmint o' the Lord will foller ye! Yer father's gray hairs will go down in sorrow ter the grave, but his mind will die before his body. An' some o' you-uns will languish in jail, an' know the despair o' the bars. . . . An' but for the coward in the blood, ye would take yer own life then! An' ye'll look at the grave before ye, an' hope ez it all ends thar." He was transfigured before them, and they quailed momentarily in the presence of so dire and authoritative a prophecy. But the effect soon was lost, and when Kelsey attempted to leave, one of the sons threw himself against the door and prevented.

The night wore on, the fire roared, and the men sat intently listening about the hearth. Suddenly there was a growl from the dogs under the house, and then the sound of crunching hoofs on the snow. The men moved out, swift and silent as shadows, there was a struggle in the road, a wild cry for help, the firing of a pistol, and 'Cajah Green was a prisoner in the hands of the murderous Cayces. Kelsey, who had no horse, was made to ride with the prisoner and just in front of him, and about them rode the silent squad of moonshiners. Micajah Green begged for his life as he went,—he denied, and explained, and promised; but old man Cayce savagely and briefly commented: "Ye cotton ter

puttin' folks in jail, 'Cajah! Yer turn now! We'll put ye whar the dogs won't bite ye." And so in the still night they wound their way through the dense laurel to the mouth of the cave where the Cayce whisky still once stood. They could hear the sound of the dark, cold water rippling in the vaulted place where the dammed current now rose halfway to the roof. The wretched prisoner, foreseeing the savage form of his death, made a last despairing struggle, and Pete Cayce, reaching up, cried out to Kelsey, "Lemme git a holt of him, Hi." "Hyar he be," gasped the parson; there was another frantic struggle as they tore the doomed man from the horse, a splash, a muffled cry, and a man disappeared in the black water. A great bowlder hard by was given a push, and fell, completely blocking the cave's mouth. Then the terrorized men mounted their horses in the darkness and rode away in all directions as if pursued. The next day it was reported that just at daybreak that morning Micajah Green was seen riding by on his big gray horse at a wild rate of speed; and slowly it dawned on the inhabitants of the Big Smoky that, Christlike, the Prophet had sacrificed himself for his inveterate enemy, and lay dead in the black waters of the cave.

PROVINCIAL TYPES IN THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY

CHAPTER XI

A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE FIELD

It is a little difficult for a professional humorist to make people think that he is making a positive addition to the knowledge of any section of the country or of its indigenous types; but even in "Life on the Mississippi" Mr. Clemens has given us some very distinct and picturesque impressions of provincial character in the Southwest. And this is particularly true in "Huckleberry Finn," whose hero became familiar to the world as the notorious son of the town drunkard in "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer." If, as Mr. Howells thinks, Mark Twain's humor is, at its best, "the foamy break of the strong tide of earnestness in him," we should expect to find even in such a work as "Huckleberry Finn" much that is vital in characterization and interesting for its very truth's sake. Many readers will be surprised to know that one of the most authoritative critics of the world, Mr. Andrew Lang, says that "Huckleberry Finn" is already "an historical novel and more valuable, perhaps, to the historian than 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' for it is written without partisanship and without 'a purpose.' . . . The world appreciates it, no doubt, but 'cultured critics' are probably unaware of its singular value."

The homely but inimitable tale of how Huck, with his new-found fortune, at interest, yielding a dollar a day — "more than a body could tell what to do with" — became the adopted son of the Widow Douglass; and how he rebelled from respectability and new clothes and regularity, and particularly from the moral "pecking" of the "slim old maid," Miss Watson; and how he escaped in the night to relieve the terrible ennui and joined Tom Sawyer's robber gang in the cave; how he consulted Miss Watson's "nigger," Jim, — with his prophetic "hair-ball," — about Huck's drunken father and his purposes; and how the father went to law about him with the widow and finally carried his son off up the Mississippi in a skiff and kept him a sort of prisoner in an old log hut, until the restraint and the cowhiding and his father's delirium tremens got to be too much for Huck, and he made his escape down the river in a canoe, — such is the beginning of this unique and dramatic story, that gives so many vivid impressions of life on the river and along the fringes of the adjoining states. Huck's night arrival at Jackson's Island, his silent watching of the efforts to raise his supposed dead body from the river by means of the cannon-firing, his sensational discovery on the island of Miss Watson's runaway "nigger," Jim, their adventurous life together in the cavern, Huck's disguise as a girl, and the swift penetration of it by Mrs. Judith Loftus of St. Petersburg, and the sudden slipping away of slave and boy from their dangerous island, — these are part of the absorbing narrative. And the wreck with its murderous gang, the blinding fogs and measureless depths of star-lit skies, the hopeless missing of Cairo in the night, the smashing of the raft by the big steamer, all pass before us like a panorama of the great stream.

And then, what strokes of dramatic power in the description of the vendetta, — the family feud of the fighting Shepherdsons and Grangerfords, — and what telling characterizations in Huck himself, his besotted and brutalized father, the loyal and superstitious Jim, Colonel Sherborne, who coolly shoots old Boggs and superbly quells the mob; the various old aunts and uncles; and those humorous impostors, the "Duke," and the "King." A great variety of phases in the life of the Southwest, forty or fifty years ago, is set forth with realistic power — such phases as camp-meetings and circuses and funerals and entertainments. And nights on the great river, storms, sketches of decayed towns and of changing landscape, woods, and cotton fields are painted with a simple and direct power that makes them the vivid environment of all these varied types of peculiar character. The story, indeed, lapses into a long-drawn and rather tedious burlesque, in the formal freeing of the already free Jim according to Tom Sawyer's "best authorities"; yet here is a realism of such intense interest and authenticity that occasional defects in taste can easily be overlooked. And through it all is illustrated that humorous power of calm exaggeration which the world has come to recognize as Mr. Clemens's distinctive gift.

Before the state of Indiana had become a center of literary activity and interest, and the ways of primitive Hoosier life had been little studied, there appeared in 1872 "The Hoosier Schoolmaster," written by a man who was born in the southern part of the state in the memorable year of 1837, and who spent his boyhood there in farm labor and as a clerk in a country store. His mother, after the death of his father, had married a Methodist doctor of divinity in Indiana; and this gave him what people of his

neighborhood would have called "a right smart chance of travel." At nineteen this boy became a circuit rider in Indiana for his chosen church; and in this way Edward Eggleston became peculiarly fitted by environment and experience to portray the provincial and unique types that move so vigorously through the pages of "The Circuit Rider," "The End of the World," "Roxy," and "The Hoosier Schoolmaster." The opening chapter of the last-mentioned book presents a strange picture of one of those crude and almost repulsive families that must have existed in early Indiana history, — old Jack Means, the school trustee, to whom Ralph Hartsook made application for the place of schoolmaster in the Flat Crick school; "Bud" Means, who seemed to be measuring the young applicant by the standard of muscle alone; the giggling "Sis," who was evidently delighted at the prospect of seeing the bulldog take hold of the somewhat disheartened teacher; "Bill," who on the first morning of school put the puppy in the master's desk; and "Bull" himself, who, despite his threatening looks, was a bulldog to teach by example the advantages of "nerve," — "Ef Bull once takes a holt, heaven and yarth can't make him let go."

What with fighting the boys; incurring the hostility of a gang of horse-thieves and burglars, who have at their head the principal physician among the Flat Crickers; narrowly escaping with his life from the instigated mob; and being driven to public trial for alleged complicity in robbery, — the young schoolmaster has a somewhat tragic history. But he makes his innocence and courage clear in the trial, and finally succeeds in marrying Hannah, the "bound gal," who had proved victorious over him in that most dramatic of events, the country spelling-match.

Hannah's brother, Shocky, whom "God forgot," — at least for a time, — is a pathetic little figure, made doubly so by the misery of his mother in the poorhouse and of his sister, Hannah, bound out to service. Old pipe-smoking Mrs. Means, with her thrifty proverb of "Git a plenty while you're a-gittin'"; 'Squire Hawkins, with his black gloves, waxen-colored wig, glass eye, and false teeth; Jeems Phillips, that genius in "Webster's Elementary"; and the insinuating but silent Dr. Small, — are all distinctly individualized from the life. And so are Pete Jones, with his educational theory of "No lickin' no larnin'"; Granny Sanders, the fountain-head of gossip; Miss Martha Hawkins, whose reminiscence always began, "When I was to Bosting"; and the generous-hearted, one-legged, warlike old basket-maker who summed up his observations with the despairing remark that "we're all selfish akordin' to my tell."

In the midst of all the crude religious sects of the time stands out the Rev. Mr. Bosaw of the "Hardshell" Baptist denomination, — otherwise known as the "Whisky Baptists" and the "Forty-gallon Baptists," — and Mr. Eggleston gives verbatim the incredible sermon preached by the reverend gentleman with the rich, red nose, the nasal resonance, and the melancholy minor key, — whose opening words were, "the ox-ah knoweth his owner-ah, and-ah the ass-ah his master's crib-ah." A fit companion type with Mr. Bosaw is "Brother Sodom," who always "shook his brimstone wallet" over the people and pushed them to the edge of hell.

What might be called a secondary hero of the book is "Bud" Means, the young giant whom the schoolmaster won over by his grit and his character. He has become famous

for his founding of "The Church of the Best Licks," which included all who would "put in their best licks for Jesus Christ" (who was himself "a kind of a Flat Cricker"). Another piece of capital character-drawing is that of Miss Nancy Sawyer, the old maid who was a benediction to the whole town as well as to the young schoolmaster and Shocky. And the unspeakable conditions under which Shocky's mother lived in the poorhouse could not have been more repellently described by Dickens himself than they have been in Mr. Eggleston's chapter on "A Charitable Institution." The book as a whole is a convincing study of types and a time that were a significant part of the development of the great Middle West.

In such short stories as "Ma' Bowlin'," "Whitsun Harp, Regulator," "Sist' Chaney's Black Silk" and "The Mortgage on Jeffy," which appear in the two collections called "Knitters in the Sun" and "Otto the Knight," Miss Alice French, more familiarly known by her pseudonym, "Octave Thanet," has given sketches of life as seen from a plantation in Arkansas, which the author makes her winter home; and phases of character in other parts of the South are touched in "The Bishop's Vagabond" and "Half a Curse." But her best-known sketches are those contained in "Stories of a Western Town," in which she shows special knowledge of average types in Iowa and other communities west of the Mississippi. Her portrayal is intimate, vigorous, and sympathetic, and helps to give a somewhat adequate conception of what the actual life and feeling and aspiration are in certain parts of the Mississippi Valley.

In his preface to "The Story of a Country Town" Mr. Edgar Watson Howe tells us that the book was written at night after the editorial work of the day was done. Such

conditions of production may not have influenced its point of view and its prevailing tone. But the book, like the Kansas town that it portrays, lacks a certain sunny quality of ease and geniality, which is doubtless due to the nature of the social life it sets forth so convincingly. Kansas has, also, in William Allen White an interpreter of certain phases of her life, and the interpretation is exceedingly keen in its insight and humorous and vigorous in its expression, as is shown in his volume of sketches entitled "The Real Issue" and in his juvenile "Court of Boyville."

Hamlin Garland's early life in Wisconsin, Iowa, and Dakota gave him abundant opportunity to study and appreciate the crude, earnest, aspiring, self-sacrificing men and women who made up the bone and sinew of the pioneer population of the great Northwest. Whether in the story of "A Little Norsk," with its Dakota blizzard, its helpless child, and its pathetic burial of "Flaxen's" mother, or in "Prairie Folks" and the remarkable development of a young farm girl's nature in "Rose of Dutcher's Coolly," or in the depressing short stories of "Main-Traveled Roads," Mr. Garland shows a penetration and a knowledge and a sincerity of sympathy that make his work vital and effective, even if at times it seems to be too regularly keyed to misery and hopelessness. But any one who has lived in the Northwest, and is at all familiar with the grim conditions of the average farmer's family even a few years ago, will be likely to feel that Mr. Garland's relentless depiction is, though heart-sickening, essentially true.

Few more convincing and powerful pictures of Western provincial types can be found than those in "A Branch Road," "Up the Coolly," and "Under the Lion's Paw"; while underneath the tenderness and patient suffering of "The

Return of the Private" is felt the steel-like edge of a righteous satire. "Mrs. Ripley's Trip" has in it a sort of sad humor and a closeness of sympathetic characterization that makes an irresistible appeal to the heart of every man who perchance recalls the laborious and conscientious days of his own unselfish mother.

The jubilant young farmer, Will Hannan, singing in the September dawn, or, fiercely jealous, laboring with might and main in the strenuous threshing, or at meal-time apparently ashamed of his sweetheart's open preference for himself in the presence of the other threshers; his savage resentment at their use of Agnes Dingman's name in connection with his own; and his bitter refusal to wait and take supper with his comrades and his sweetheart, — this is the very human and unconventional opening to "A Branch Road." And then the young fellow's eager preparations for the county fair, his swift morning ride behind the lively colts, the maddening accident and delay, the silent house and the drawn curtains and no waiting sweetheart, and his blinding, merciless rage, with all it involved in long years of absence, misery of married life for Agnes Dingman, and bitter repentance for himself, — such is the tragic development from small beginnings; — until he at length enters into the cruelty of his old sweetheart's fate, and desperately carries her and her child out into a world of hope and the happiness of love. Such a story as this — with all its sympathy for nature and for human nature — comes near to reality, and confirms, like the other stories in the volume, the impression of unrelenting hardness in much of the farmers' experience in the great Northwest during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER XII

"THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN" BY "MARK TWAIN"

In his sense of duty and of honor, his abounding humor, his energy and dauntless pluck, his simplicity and sympathy and fidelity, Mr. Clemens is justly regarded as a high type of an American citizen. He naturally enough comprehends pretty fully the salient characteristics of American types, and has, besides, the literary art to embody them in entertaining and convincing form. The impression of artistry in his work, however, is likely to be lost in a laugh, — the truth and power and dramatic quality in his characterizations are often overlooked in the effects of his humor. As Mr. Howells suggests, "Mark Twain portrays and interprets real types, not only with exquisite appreciation and sympathy, but with a force and truth of drawing that makes them permanent." And the especial praise of the literary critics is given to "Huckleberry Finn" for its essential truthfulness to certain aspects of provincial life and character along the Mississippi and the borders of adjoining states. Professor Barrett Wendell in our own country and Andrew Lang in England have both borne strong testimony to the value and charm of this portrayal of life in the Mississippi Valley some fifty years ago.

Mr. Clemens's own boyhood life at Hannibal, Missouri, on the Mississippi River, and his years as a pilot on the

same river, gave him a vivid background and a close familiarity with various Southwestern types that proved invaluable in the production of such a book as "Huckleberry Finn."

Huckleberry Finn first became known to the reading world as the companion of Tom Sawyer, of whose "Adventures" he was a part. Their good luck in finding the money hidden by the robbers in a cave left Huck in such affluent circumstances that he was getting a dollar a day in interest — "more than a body could tell what to do with." He had been adopted by the Widow Douglass, who was bent on civilizing him; but he found it rough living in the house all the time, considering how "dismal regular and decent the widow was in all her ways." Her attempt to spiritualize Huck is thus described by himself: "After supper she got out her book and learned me about Moses and the Bulrushers, and I was in a sweat to find out all about him; but by and by she let it out that Moses had been dead a considerable long time; so then I didn't care no more about him, because I don't take no stock in dead people." And Miss Watson, the slim old-maid sister of the Widow, "took a set" at Huck, also, with the spelling-book and frequent injunctions on conduct. Miss Watson would say, "Don't put your feet up there, Huckleberry;" and, "Don't scrunch up like that, Huckleberry — set up straight;" and a little later she would say, "Don't gap and stretch like that, Huckleberry — why don't you try to behave?" All of which had a wearisome effect on Huck. He called it "pecking" at him. "Then she told me all about the bad place, and I said I wished I was there. She got mad then, but I didn't mean no harm. All I wanted was to get somewheres; all I wanted was a change; I warn't particular. She said it was wicked to say what I said; said she wouldn't

say it for the whole world; *she* was going to live so as to go to the good place. Well, I couldn't see no advantage in going where she was going, so I made up my mind I wouldn't try for it." The morning after a night escapade with Tom Sawyer, Miss Watson took Huck into a closet and prayed with him, and told him to pray every day, remarking as an inducement that whatever he prayed for he would get. "But it warn't so. I tried it. Once I got a fishline, but no hooks. It warn't any good to me without hooks. I tried for the hooks three or four times, but somehow I couldn't make it work. By and by, one day, I asked Miss Watson to try for me, but she said I was a fool." However, the widow explained to her protégé that he must pray for "spiritual gifts."

The unexpected appearance of Huck's drunken and vagabond father in the boy's room at the widow's had, for a moment, a terrifying effect on Huck. After looking his son all over, the father said, with a critical and injured air: "Starchy clothes — very. You think you're a good deal of a big-bug, *don't* you?" To which Huck was non-committal; and the father continued: "You've put on considerable many frills since I been away. I'll take you down a peg before I get done with you. You're educated, too, they say — can read and write. You think you're better'n your father, now, don't you, because he can't? *I'll* take it out of you. Who told you you might meddle with such hifalut'n foolishness, hey?" On Huck's reply that it was the widow, the father threatened to "learn her how to meddle," and then added, ominously: "And looky here — you drop that school, you hear? I'll learn people to bring up a boy to put on airs over his own father, and let on to be better'n what *he* is. You lemme catch you fooling around that school

From "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn."
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again, you hear? Your mother couldn't read, and she couldn't write, nuther, before she died. None of the family couldn't write before *they* died. I can't; and here you're a-swelling yourself up like this. I ain't the man to stand it — you hear?" Asked by his father to read a little, as an example of what he could do, Huck read something about General Washington and the wars; when suddenly the father struck the book from his son's hand and cried out angrily: "It's so. You can do it. I had my doubts when you told me. Now, looky here; you stop that putting on frills. I won't have it. I'll lay for you, my smarty; and if I catch you about that school, I'll tan you good. First you know you'll get religion. I never see such a son."

To show his superiority to the widow who had adopted Huck, his father carried him off up the river to an old log hut he had made the headquarters for his vagrant life. The intolerable monotony of a respectable life with the widow was thus done away with; but Huck soon found that his father's restraint, ugly temper, and drunkenness, finally culminating in a night of delirium tremens, were as hard to bear as the widow's respectability, and he escaped down the river to Jackson's Island. The next morning after his arrival he lay and listened to the booming of the cannon by which they were endeavoring to find his dead body; and a little later the ferry-boat, carrying his own father, Judge Thatcher, who had invested Huck's money for him, and Tom Sawyer, his boon companion, came floating down close to the island in its effort to find some trace of the dead Huck, who was lying behind a log and watching the anxious faces of his friends.

It was on this island that he discovered Miss Watson's runaway "nigger," Jim, just as he was waking at dawn by

the side of his camp-fire. Jim, in his amazement at seeing Huck, who had been reported murdered, suddenly sprang up, and then dropped upon his knees and put his hands together, crying superstitiously: "Doan' hurt me — don't! I hain't ever done no harm to a ghos'. I awlus liked dead people, en done all I could for 'em. Yo go en git in de river agin, whah you b'longs, en doan' do nuffin' to Ole Jim, 'at 'uz awluz yo' fr'en'." But Jim was soon so much reassured that he told Huck all the details of his own escape. He even grew confidential and told Huck about his past speculation in stock, — a cow, and in a bank set up by "Misto Bradish's nigger," — at the end of which Jim had only ten cents left. "Well, I 'uz gwyne to spen' it, but I had a dream, 'en de dream tole me to give it to a nigger name' Balum — Balum's Ass dey call him for short; he's one er dem chuckle-heads, you know. But he's lucky, dey say, en I see I warn't lucky. De dream say let Balum inves' de ten cents en he'd make a raise for me. Well, Balum he tuck de money, en when he wuz in church he hear de preacher say dat whoever give to de po' len' to de Lord, en boun' to git his money back a hund'd times. So Balum he tuck en give de ten cents to de po', en laid low to see what wuz gwyne to come of it." To Huck's inquiry as to what did come of it, the darky replied: "Nuffin never come of it. I couldn' manage to k'leck dat money no way; en Balum he couldn'. I ain' gwyne to len' no mo' money 'dout I see de security. Boun' to git yo' money back a hund'd times, de preacher says! Ef I could git de ten *cents* back, I'd call it squah, en be glad er de chanst." Huck's hopeful suggestion that Jim was going to be rich sometime or other — according to Jim's own prophecy — called to the negro's mind the happy

thought that he was already rich. "I owns myse'f, en I's wuth eight hund'd dollars. I wisht I had de money, I wouldn' want no mo'."

Huck's discovery — in the guise of a girl — that there was a reward out for the capture of Jim and that Jackson's Island was a dangerous place, was the signal for their hurried departure from the island by night. The second night — they concealed themselves in a "towhead" of cottonwoods during the day — the raft they were on ran between seven and eight hours, with a current that carried them along over four miles an hour. "It was kind of solemn," as Huck said, "drifting down the big still river, laying on our backs looking up at the stars, and we didn't ever feel like talking loud, and it warn't often that we laughed — only a little kind of a low chuckle. . . . Every night we passed towns, some of them away up on black hillsides nothing but just a shiny bed of lights; not a house could you see. The fifth night we passed St. Louis, and it was like the whole world lit up. In St. Petersburg they used to say there was twenty or thirty thousand people in St. Louis, but I never believed it till I see that wonderful spread of lights at two o'clock that still night. There warn't a sound there; everybody was asleep."

Huck's escape from the wreck of the raft that had been smashed by a steamboat in the night brought him to the big old-fashioned double log house of Colonel Grangerford, whose dogs refused to let the dripping Huck go by. After a very warlike examination of Huck, he was gradually admitted to the house; and when it was learned that he was in no way connected with the rival house of the Shepherdsons, — between whom and the Grangerfords there was a deadly feud, — Huck was very hospitably received and compassion-

ately entertained on the strength of his trumped-up story. In the admiring words of Huck: "It was a mighty nice family, and a mighty nice house, too. I hadn't seen no house out in the country before that was so nice and had so much style. It didn't have an iron latch on the front door, nor a wooden one with a buckskin string, but a brass knob to turn, the same as houses in a town. There warn't no bed in the parlor, nor a sign of a bed; but heaps of parlors in towns has beds in them. There was a big fireplace that was bricked on the bottom, and the bricks was kept clean and red by pouring water on them and scrubbing them with another brick. . . . They had big brass dog-irons that could hold up a saw-log." There was also a wonderful clock ("it was beautiful to hear that clock tick"), and some books piled up with perfect exactness on each corner of the table. "One was a big family Bible full of pictures. One was 'Pilgrim's Progress,' about a man that left his family, it didn't say why. I read considerable in it now and then. The statements was interesting but tough. Another was 'Friendship's Offering,' full of beautiful stuff and poetry; but I didn't read the poetry. Another was 'Henry Clay's Speeches,' and another was Dr. Gunn's 'Family Medicine,' which told you all about what to do if a body was sick or dead." Among the pictures were some strange crayons made at the age of fifteen by a daughter who had since died. "One was a woman in a slim black dress, belted small under the armpits, with bulges like a cabbage in the middle of the sleeves, and a large black scoop-shovel bonnet with a black veil, and white slim ankles crossed about with black tape, and very wee black slippers, like a chisel, and she was leaning pensive on a tombstone on her right elbow, under a weeping willow, and her other hand hanging down her side

holding a white handkerchief and a reticule, and underneath the picture it said 'Shall I Never See Thee More Alas.'" A second crayon was entitled "I Shall Never Hear Thy Sweet Chirrup More Alas," and another bore the pathetic announcement, "And Art Thou Gone Yes Thou Art Gone Alas." Huck has given us his critical judgment on these pictures and also their effect on his feelings. "These was all nice pictures, I reckon, but I didn't somehow seem to take to them, because if ever I was down a little they always give me the fan-tods."

In the eyes of Huck the proprietor of the place was a gentleman — "a gentleman all over." Colonel Grangerford — and he must have been some near relative of the colonel's drawn with so much spirit and liking by Mr. Page and Hopkinson Smith — was "very tall and very slim, and had a darkish-paly complexion, not a sign of red in it anywheres; he was clean shaved every morning all over his thin face, and he had the thinnest kind of lips, and the thinnest kind of nostrils, and a high nose, and heavy eyebrows, and the blackest kind of eyes, sunk so deep back that they seemed like they was looking out of caverns at you, as you may say. His forehead was high, and his hair was black and straight and hung to his shoulders. His hands was long and thin, and every day of his life he put on a clean shirt and a full suit from head to foot made out of linen so white it hurt your eyes to look at it; and on Sundays he wore a blue tail-coat with brass buttons on it." He had a personal dignity that Huck was impressed by, and a pervasive kindliness, and his smile was good to see. In his presence manners were instinctively good, and there was a genial sunshine about the man that every one liked; "but when he straightened himself up like a liberty-pole, and the lightning began

to flicker out from under his eyebrows, you wanted to climb a tree first, and find out what the matter was afterwards."

The tall, handsome older sons, Tom and Bob, dressed, like their father, in white linen from head to foot, and wore broad Panama hats; and in their home life they had been reared to show especial courtesy to the parents. On the latter's arrival in the dining room the sons always rose from their chairs and remained standing till their parents were seated; and after mixing at the sideboard a glass of bitters for their father and then for themselves, they would bow and say, "Our duty to you, sir and madam."

But this Southern family, so chivalrous and courtly toward one another, were in deadly feud with their neighbors, the rival family of the Shepherdsons. Huck's ignorance of a feud was somewhat lessened by Buck Grangerford's definition: "Well, a feud is this way: A man has a quarrel with another man, and kills him; then that other man's brother kills *him;* then the other brothers, on both sides, goes for one another; then the *cousins* chip in — and by and by everybody's killed off, and there ain't no more feud. But it's kind of slow, and takes a long time." Buck also informed Huck that their own feud started some thirty years before, when there was "trouble 'bout something," a lawsuit, and a shooting of the man who won the suit by the man who lost. Buck was entirely ignorant of the cause of the trouble and whether it was a Grangerford or a Shepherdson that did the shooting; but he thought that perhaps his father knew. To Huck's question as to whether many had been killed in the feud, Buck cheerfully replied: "Yes; right smart chance of funnerals. But they don't always kill. Pa's got a few buckshot in him; but he don't mind it 'cuz he don't weigh much, anyway. Bob's been carved up some

with a bowie, and Tom's been hurt once or twice." "Has anybody been killed this year, Buck?" inquired Huck. "Yes; we got one and they got one."

Buck, in a truly chivalrous spirit, insisted that there wasn't a coward among "them Shepherdsons," even if they were inveterate enemies. "Why, that old man [Shepherdson] kep' up his end in a fight one day for half an hour against three Grangerfords, and come out winner. They was all a-horseback; he lit off of his horse and got behind a little woodpile, and kep' his horse before him to stop the bullets; but the Grangerfords stayed on their horses and capered around the old man, and peppered away at him, and he peppered away at them. Him and his horse both went home pretty leaky and crippled, but the Grangerfords had to be *fetched* home, and one of 'em was dead, and another died the next day. No, sir; if a body's out hunting for cowards, he don't want to fool away any time amongst them Shepherdsons, becuz they don't breed any of that *kind*."

And Huck himself, from his lookout in a tree, was to see Buck Grangerford and another young man shot to death by the merciless Shepherdsons, one of whose number had run off in the night with Colonel Grangerford's younger daughter

Mr. Clemens's theme of savage and absurd family wars in the South, while treated in his own unique and satirical way, is suggestive of the annihilating contest described by John T. Fox, Jr., in his "Cumberland Vendetta," and of the remorseless hatred of the Cayce family for Micajah Green, as portrayed so dramatically by Miss Murfree in "The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains."

Two sublime types of professional humbugs, such as must now and then visit gullible small towns along the

Mississippi in the Southwest, are the "Duke of Bridgewater" and the "King," whom Huck, under mental protest, rescued from an outraged community. The King was about seventy, with a bald head and very gray whiskers. He wore an old battered-up slouch hat, a greasy blue woolen shirt, and ragged old blue jeans breeches stuffed into his boot-tops, and home-knit "galluses," — or rather only one; and when rescued he and his companion, the Duke, were each carrying a "big, fat, ratty-looking" carpet-bag.

They proved to be strangers to each other, and in explaining the cause of his trouble the Duke said to his new-found acquaintance: "Well, I'd been selling an article to take the tartar off the teeth, — and it does take it off, too, and gener'ly the enamel along with it, — but I stayed about one night longer than I ought to, and was just in the act of sliding out when I ran across you on the trail this side of town. . . . That's the whole yarn, what's yourn?" To which the King replied, with a little more detail: "Well, I'd ben a-runnin' a little temperance revival thar 'bout a week, and was the pet of the women-folks, big and little, for I was makin' it mighty warm for the rummies, I *tell* you, and takin' as much as five or six dollars a night — ten cents a head, children and niggers free — and business a-growin' all the time, when somehow or another a little report got around last night that I had a way of puttin' in my time with a private jug on the sly. A nigger rousted me out this mornin' and told me the people was getherin' on the quiet with their dogs and horses, and they'd be along pretty soon and give me 'bout half an hour's start, and then run me down if they could; and if they got me they'd tar and feather me and ride me on a rail, sure. I didn't wait for no breakfast — I warn't hungry."

It seemed feasible that these two "professionals" should from this time forth reënforce each other's talents, the Duke of Bridgewater (the King called it "Bilgewater") explaining first what his "line" was: "Jour printer by trade; do a little in patent medicines; theater-actor — tragedy, you know; take a turn to mesmerism and phrenology when there's a chance; teach singing — geography school for a change; sling a lecture sometimes — oh, I do lots of things — most anything that comes handy, so it ain't work." The King then explained his "lay": "I've done considerable in the doctoring way in my time. Layin' on o' hands is my best holt — for cancer and paralysis, and sich things; and I k'n tell a fortune pretty good when I've got somebody along to find out the facts for me. Preachin's my line, too, and workin' camp-meetin's and missionaryin' around."

Learning that a camp-meeting was being held in the woods some two miles back from the little river town near which the raft was tied up for the day, the King "allowed" that he would go and "work it" for all it was worth, and permitted Huck to go with him. The first shed they came to contained a preacher that was "lining" out a hymn. He lined out two lines and everybody sang them; and then he lined out two more for them to sing, and so on indefinitely. The people grew more and more animated, and sang louder and louder; and toward the end some began to groan and some to shout. The preacher was of the loud-voiced, hortatory, unctuous type that Mr. Eggleston has illustrated in "Rev. Mr. Bosaw" and Miss Murfree in "Brother Jake Tobin." In the language of Huck: "He went weaving first to one side of the platform and then the other, and then a-leaning down over the front of it, with his arms and his body going all the time, and shouting his words out

with all his might; and every now and then he would hold up his Bible and spread it open and kind of pass it around this way and that, shouting, 'It's the brazen serpent in the wilderness! Look upon it and live!' and people would shout out, 'Glory! — A-a-*men!*' And so he went on, and the people groaning and crying and saying Amen: 'Oh, come to the mourners' bench! come, black with sin! (*amen!*) come, sick and sore! (*amen!*) come, lame and halt and blind! (*amen!*) come, pore and needy, sunk in shame! (*a-a-men!*) Come, all that's worn and soiled and suffering! — come with a broken spirit! come with a contrite heart! come in your rags and sin and dirt! the waters that cleanse is free, the door of heaven stands open — oh, enter in and be at rest! (*A-a-men, glory, glory hallelujah!*)'" The shouting and crying, as reported by Huck, became so great that the preacher's words could no longer be distinguished. People rose in all parts of the crowd and made their way by sheer strength to the mourners' bench, with the tears streaming down their faces; and when the mourners had filled the front benches in a throng, they sang and shouted and flung themselves down on the straw, "just crazy and wild."

By playing the part of a converted pirate who had been robbed the night before, and was now returning to the Indian Ocean to convert his brother pirates, the King was able to carry back to the raft some eighty-seven dollars and seventy-five cents which he had "gathered in" at the camp-meeting by a skillful appeal from the platform and passing the hat for a collection. He promised to say to every pirate converted, "Don't you thank me, don't you give me no credit; it all belongs to them dear people in Pokeville camp-meeting, natural brothers and benefactors

of the race, and that dear preacher there, the truest friend a pirate ever had!" And the King had brought back with him, too, a three-gallon jug of whisky, which he had found under a wagon when he was starting for the raft through the woods. To use Huck's report: "The King said, take it all around, it laid over any day he'd ever put in in the missionarying line. He said it warn't no use talking, heathens don't amount to shucks alongside of pirates to work a camp-meeting with."

A truly Southern provincial type is the fierce-natured, cool-headed Colonel Sherborne who shot down in cold blood the drunken, good-natured, but abusive Boggs; and when the mob threatened him with lynching, his accurate knowledge of them was shown by his sudden appearance on the porch of his home and his cool defiance, characteristically reënforced by a shot gun: "The idea of *you* lynching anybody! It's amusing. The idea of you thinking you had pluck enough to lynch a *man!* . . . You didn't want to come. . . . But if only *half*-a-man — like Buck Harkness, there — shouts 'Lynch him! lynch him!' you're afraid to back down — afraid you'll be found out to be what you are — *cowards* — and so you raise a yell, and hang yourselves on to that half-a-man's coat-tail, and come raging up here, swearing what big things you're going to do. The pitifulest thing out is a mob; that's what an army is — a mob; they don't fight with courage that's born in them, but with courage that's borrowed from their mass, and from their officers. But a mob without any *man* at the head of it is *beneath* pitifulness. Now the thing for *you* to do is droop your tails and go home and crawl in a hole. . . . Now *leave* — and take your half-a-man with you." As the Colonel tossed his gun up across his left arm and cocked

it, the mob "washed back sudden," broke apart, and dashed into a wild run, with the "half-a-man" bringing up the rear.

Old Uncle Silas Phelps, the easy-going, inconsequential farmer and preacher, who had a little log church down back of the plantation and "never charged nothing for his preaching, and it was worth it, too"; the generous-souled, credulous, and motherly Aunt Sally; and the versatile, unconscionable Tom Sawyer, who insisted on freeing in formal and adventurous style the negro Jim that was already free, — these are additional types in "Huckleberry Finn" that Mr. Clemens has characterized with easy and inimitable touch. In fact, much of the characterization in the book seems wrought out of the closest familiarity with those strange, crude, virile types that belonged to life along the Mississippi half a century ago.

CHAPTER XIII

"THE HOOSIER SCHOOLMASTER" BY EDWARD EGGLESTON

In writing a few years ago, in the *Forum*, on the "Formative Influences" of his own life, Mr. Eggleston remarked discriminatingly: "If I were a dispassionate critic, and were set to judge my own novels as the writings of another, I should have to say that what distinguishes them from other works of fiction is the prominence which they give to social conditions; that the individual characters are here treated to a greater degree than elsewhere as parts of a study of a society — as in some sense the logical results of the environment. Whatever may be the rank assigned to these stories as works of literary art, they will always have a certain value as materials for the student of social history. Not that in writing them any such purpose was consciously present; it is what we do without exactly intending it that is most characteristic."

The old-time residents of Indiana have themselves accepted "The Hoosier Schoolmaster" as essentially true to the life and manners of Southern Indiana half a century ago. The sordid, brutal, lawless West of the days before the railroads, with its hardness and wickedness as well as its courage and heroic industry, Mr. Eggleston seems to have known and understood. And it is not at all surprising, for his own life in Indiana on a farm and as a Methodist "circuit rider,"

and also on the frontier in Minnesota in search of health, gave him a vital closeness to primitive types among the privations and struggles that were a necessary part of the earlier history of the West. In truth, so close a reflection of provincial life under such conditions is not entirely captivating, having a certain repulsiveness; yet it has great interest because it is a transcript, and because it is often intensely dramatic.

Few families could be less attractive to a young and somewhat educated man than was that of "old Jack Means," the school trustee to whom the prospective "schoolmaster" applied for a place as teacher of the "Flat Crick" district school. Old Jack was not encouraging the young aspirant: "You might teach a summer school, when nothin' but children come. But I 'low it takes a right smart *man* to be schoolmaster in Flat Crick in the winter. They'd pitch you out of doors, sonny, neck and heels, afore Christmas." "Bud" Means, the elder son, was meanwhile measuring the applicant by the standard of muscle, with that amiable look in his eye "which a big dog turns on a little one before shaking him." Bud's sister, in the doorway, was giggling over the prospect of seeing their large brindle bulldog "take hold" of the applicant for the school, when the old man himself called off the dog, remarking as he did so: "Ef you think you kin trust your hide in Flat Crick schoolhouse I ha'n't got no 'bjection. But ef you git licked don't come on us. Flat Crick don't pay no 'nsurance, you bet." He then suggestively added that the last schoolmaster carried a black eye for a month. However, Ralph Hartsook, the applicant, was given permission by Mr. Means to begin work at the school, and invited to stay over Sunday with the Means family, in the process of "boardin' roun'." Bud Means thereupon remarked reassuringly, with reference to

the threatening attitude of the dog, "Ef Bull once takes a holt, heaven and yarth can't make him let go."

After the first few days of discouraging experience and a deliberate effort to assume something of the bulldog's pertinacity, the young schoolmaster had this judgment passed upon him by Mr. Pete Jones, an influential neighbor of Mr. Means: "Don't believe he'll do. Don't thrash enough. Boys won't l'arn 'less you thrash 'em, says I. Leastways, mine won't. Lay it on good is what I says to a master. Lay it on good. . . . Lickin' and l'arnin' goes together. No lickin', no l'arnin', says I."

One morning before school, while sitting on the broad hearth smoking her cob pipe, old "Miss" Means grew confidential to the young schoolmaster, letting him know something of the family's early history, — how on her advice her husband had invested years before in "Congress" bottom land at a dollar and a quarter an acre: "I says to my ole man, 'Jack,' says I, 'Jack, do you git a plenty while you're a-gittin'. Git a plenty while you're a-gittin',' says I, 'fer 'twon't never be no cheaper'n 'tis now,' and it ha'n't been; I knowed 'twouldn't." Taking the pipe from her mouth to indulge in a reminiscent chuckle at her own financial shrewdness, Mrs. Means continued: "Jack didn't git rich by hard work. Bless you, no! Not him. That a'n't his way. Hard work a'n't, you know. 'Twas that air six hundred dollars he got along of me, all salted down into Flat Crick bottoms at a dollar and a quarter a' acre, and 'twas my sayin', 'git a plenty while you're a-gittin',' as done it." And then Mrs. Means diplomatically suggested that the man who got her daughter "Mirandy" — a weak-eyed and weak-headed giggler — would do well — "Flat Crick land's wuth nigh upon a hundred a' acre."

The most important social event in the Flat Crick school district was the spelling-school. Every family furnished a candle, and there were yellow "dips" and white dips smoking and flaring. And there was much ogling and giggling, flirting and courting. "I 'low," said Mr. Means, the principal trustee, "I 'low our friend the Square is jest the man to boss this 'ere consarn to-night. If nobody objects, I'll app'int him. Come, Square, don't be bashful." The Squire came to the front, and the new schoolmaster made an inventory of his appearance. He wore an aged swallowtail coat somewhat too small for him, a pair of black gloves (gloves in Flat Crick were an anomaly); a dirty, waxen-colored wig, which required frequent adjustment to the Squire's smooth pate and was of the wrong color; a semicircular row of whiskers dyed an impossible dead black; a pair of spectacles with tortoise-shell rim; a glass eye differing in color from its natural mate, and perpetually turning in and out; and a set of badly-fitting false teeth.

In accepting the honor of presiding, Squire Hawkins remarked, with a characteristic twist of his wig: "I feel as if I could be grandiloquent on this interesting occasion, but raley I must forego any such exertions. It is spelling you want. Spelling is the corner-stone, the grand underlying subterfuge, of a good eddication. I put the spellin'-book prepared by the great Daniel Webster alongside the Bible. I do, raley. I think I may put it ahead of the Bible. For if it wurn't fer spellin'-books and sich occasions as these, where would the Bible be? I should like to know. The man who got up, who compounded this work of inextricable valoo, was a benefactor to the whole human race or any other." Hereupon the Squire's spectacles fell off, he gave his wig another twist, and apprehensively felt of his glass eye.

"NEXT."

Illustration from "The Hoosier Schoolmaster"
By Edward Eggleston
Orange Judd Company, Publishers, New York

In the contest Jim Phillips, a tall, lank, "stoop-shouldered" fellow, who had spelled down the last three masters, was pitted against the new schoolmaster. Jim spelled as if he "knew more about the spelling-book than old Noah Webster himself." It was done eagerly, confidently, and brilliantly, and the odds, in the eyes of the company, were all in Phillips's favor, — especially since the young schoolmaster spelled with a certain hesitation and deliberateness that seemed to argue lack of confidence, but really meant only a dogged determination to win. But "theodolite" proved too much for the redoubtable Jim; and as Ralph, the schoolmaster, spelled it slowly and correctly, the excitement was so great that the spelling was suspended for a few minutes. "He's powerful smart is the master," said old Jack Means, the school trustee, exultingly. "He'll beat the whole kit and tuck of 'em afore he's through. I know'd he was smart. That's the reason I tuck him." "Yaas, but he don't lick enough. Not nigh," answered Pete Jones. "No lickin', no l'arnin', says I."

But what was the excitement when Hannah, the bound girl at old Jack Means's, stood alone, opposed to the schoolmaster on the other side, and seemed to be easily holding her own. The sympathy of everybody went over to her side; indeed, even the schoolmaster, as he looked at her fine, sensitive face, flushing and shining with interest, and saw upon her the quickening effect of applause and sympathy, began to be smitten with a peculiar feeling of admiration, and he no longer craved a victory. And finally, when the schoolmaster went down before the serried ranks of new words that the Squire had found outside the spelling-book, and Hannah spelled the word he missed, the climax was dramatic enough to satisfy every one's sense of the unexpected.

One Saturday afternoon the schoolmaster, in following an unknown path through the woods from Squire Hawkins's, came upon Rocky Hollow and the secluded home of old John Pearson, the one-legged basket-maker, who in his instinctive kindliness had given a home to Shocky, the young brother of Hannah the bound girl, whose mother had been obliged to go to the poorhouse. Squire Hawkins's daughter Martha was already there on the schoolmaster's arrival, and the old rheumatic wife of Pearson impulsively praised her to the schoolmaster for her thoughtfulness in coming to see them so often. Miss Martha blushingly said she came because Rocky Hollow reminded her of a place she used to know "at the East," and because Mr. and Mrs. Pearson also reminded her of people she knew "at the East." In fact, Miss Hawkins had a characteristic way of beginning a sentence, "When I was to Bosting," etc.

The old basket-maker was a pretended cynic in his philosophy of life; and a favorite judgment of his on the actions and motives of mankind in general, including himself, was put in this laconic form, "We're all selfish akordin' to my tell." When Shocky protested that the basket-maker wasn't selfish when he sat up every night for two weeks with Shocky's sick father, the old man insisted: "Yes, I was, too! Your father was a miserable Britisher. I'd fit redcoats in the war of eighteen-twelve, and lost my leg by one of 'em stickin' his dog-on'd bagonet right through it, that night at Lundy's Lane; but my messmate killed him though, which is a satisfaction to think on. And I didn't like your father 'cause he was a Britisher. But ef he'd a died right here in this free country, 'thout nobody to give him a drink of water, blamed ef I wouldn't a been ashamed to set on the platform at a Fourth of July barbecue, and to hold up my

wooden leg fer to make the boys cheer! That was the selfishest thing I ever done. We're all selfish akordin' to my tell." His final compliment to Miss Hawkins, their sympathetic caller, was genuine though somewhat paradoxical, "Sometimes I'd think you was real benev'lent ef I didn't know we was all selfish."

The schoolmaster found one Sunday that his only way of hearing preaching that day at Bethel Meetin'-house was to ride on the "clay-bank" mare, with Miss Hawkins up behind. And so, though it was somewhat against his liking, he went double; and after a splashing, muddy ride he took his place on the men's side of the "hewed-log" church to listen to the sounding words of Rev. Mr. Bosaw, of the "Hardshell Baptist" school, sometimes known in that region as the "Whisky Baptists," and the "Forty-gallon Baptists." Their preachers had a habit of singing their sermons out for two or three hours at a stretch, and they were notorious for their illiteracy, not to say frequent drunkenness and viciousness. Mr. Eggleston vouches for the accuracy of the following sermon, although he says that it is impossible to give a picture of the preacher's rich red nose, his seesawing gestures, his nasal resonance, his sniffle, and his melancholy minor key: "My respective hearers-ah, you see-ah as how-ah as my tex'-ah says that the ox-ah knoweth his owner-ah, and-ah the ass-ah his master's crib-ah. A-h-h! Now, my respective hearers-ah, they're a mighty sight of resemblance-ah atewxt men-ah and oxen-ah, bekase-ah, you see, men-ah is mighty like oxen-ah. Fer they's a tremengious defference-ah atwext defferent oxen-ah, jest as thar is atwext defferent men-ah; fer the ox knoweth-ah his owner-ah, and the ass-ah his master's crib-ah. Now, my respective hearers-ah, you all know-ah

that your humble speaker-ah has got-ah jest the best yoke of steers-ah in this township-ah. They a'n't no sech steers as them air two of mine-ah in this whole kedentry-ah. Them crack oxen over at Clifty-ah ha'n't a patchin' to mine-ah. Fer the ox knoweth his owner-ah, and the ass-ah his master's crib-ah.

"Now, my respective hearers, they's a right smart sight of defference-ah atwext them air two oxen-ah, jest like they is atwext defferent men-ah. Fer-ah. [here the speaker grew vehement in voice and gesticulation, out of all proportion to the importance of the subject-matter] fer-ah, you see-ah, when I go out-ah in the mornin'-ah to yoke-ah up-ah them air steers-ah, and I says-ah, 'Wo, Berry-ah! *Wo, Berry-ah!* Wo Berry-ah,' why Berry-ah jests stands stock still-ah and don't hardly breathe-ah while I put on the yoke-ah and put in the bow-ah, and put in the key-ah, fer, my brethering-ah and sistering-ah, the ox knoweth his owner-ah, and the ass-ah his master's crib-ah. Hal-le-lu-ger-ah!

"But-ah, my hearers-ah, but-ah when I stand at t'other eend of the yoke-ah, and say: 'Come, Buck-ah! *Come, Buck-ah!* Come, Buck-ah! COME, BUCK-AH!' why, what do you think-ah? Buck-ah, that ornery ole Buck-ah, 'stid of comin' right along-ah and puttin' his neck under-ah, acts jest like some men-ah what is fools-ah. Buck-ah jest kinder sorter stands off-ah, and kinder sorter puts his head down-ah this 'ere way-ah, and kinder looks mad-ah, and says, 'Boo-*oo*-oo-OO-*ah*!'" As a preacher Rev. Mr. Bosaw is in a class with the camp-meeting type in "Huckleberry Finn" and with Brother Jake Tobin in "The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains."

Unfortunately for the schoolmaster, Bud Means, the

young giant, who was deeply in love with Martha Hawkins, had watched with fiercely jealous eye the arrival at the church of Ralph and Miss Hawkins on the same horse; and as Bud had previously seen the schoolmaster and Miss Hawkins together at the Squire's home, Bud thought he recognized in him a deliberate and dangerous rival for the hand of her who had been "to Bosting." Little did Bud realize that the heart of the schoolmaster was set on the fair, pathetic face of Hannah, the bound girl at Bud's own home.

In the schoolhouse one day Bud plainly told the master that the latter would have to leave "these 'ere diggins" or get a thrashing. At the order of Bud, the schoolmaster took off his coat preparatory to a "lickin'"; and the pluck of Ralph in the presence of such burly and superior strength as Bud's stirred the latter's admiration. "Well, you're the grittiest feller I ever did see, and ef you'd jest kep' off of my ground I wouldn't a touched you. But I a'n't agoin' to be cut out by no feller a livin' 'thout thrashin' him in an inch of his life. You see I wanted to git out of this Flat Crick way. We're a low-lived set here in Flat Crick. . . . And when you come I says, There's one as'll help me. And what did you do with your book-l'arnin' and town manners but start right out to git away the gal that I'd picked out, when I'd picked her out kase I thought, not bein' Flat Crick born herself, she might help a feller to do better! Now I won't let nobody cut me out without givin' 'em the best thrashin' it's in these 'ere arms to give."

When Bud's mistake became known, and also his sister Miranda's misleading report that her brother was courting Hannah, the bound girl, Bud's indignation and amazement knew no bounds: "Mirandy! Thunder! You believed

Mirandy! Well! Now, looky here, Mr. Hartsook, ef you was to say that my sister lied I'd lick you till yer hide wouldn't hold shucks. But *I* say, atwixt you and me and the gate-post, don't you never believe nothing that Mirandy Means says. Her and marm has set theirselves like fools to git you." And then Bud and the schoolmaster put on their coats and shook hands in what proved to be a very loyal alliance.

It was only a few minutes before Bud, who had left the school-house, reëntered and remarked with much embarrassment: "I don't know whether you're a Hardshell or a Softshell, or a Methodist, or a Campbellite, or a New Light, or a United Brother, or a Millerite, or what-not. But I says, the man what can do the clean thing by a ugly feller like me, and stick to it, when I was jest ready to eat him up, is a kind of a man to tie to." In fact, Bud was impressed by the schoolmaster's honest, heroic, self-sacrificing religious spirit, and wanted to turn over a new leaf. So that when he heard from the schoolmaster's own lips that the man of Nazareth was "a sort of a Flat Creeker himself" and that one could be a follower of His without being baptized, Bud expressed his immediate intention of putting in his "best licks for Jesus Christ," — thus starting in the little log schoolhouse a genuine church militant. And Bud's "first lick" was against Pete Jones, who struck little Shocky with his hog-drover's whip. Pete could only crawl away like a whipped puppy, muttering that he felt "consid'able shuck up like."

Bud's next "lick" was his effort to save the one-legged, outspoken old basket-maker, John Pearson, whose knowledge of a robbery in the neighborhood, involving some prominent citizens like Pete Jones and Dr. Small, had

brought upon him the imminent danger of being tarred and feathered. It took a "council of war" to convince the old soldier that it was the part of valor as well as of discretion to leave Flat Creek without delay. "No, I won't leave. You see I jest won't. What would Gin'ral Winfield Scott say ef he knew that one of them as fit at Lundy's Lane backed out, retreated, run fer fear of a passel of thieves? No, sir; me and the old flintlock will live and die together." But, finally, seeing the futility of a stubborn delay, the old basket-maker was glad to take his secret departure in the night on the back of Bud's roan colt, while Bud himself trudged along by his side six miles to Buckeye Run to bring back the colt.

Bud's next "best lick" was in his effort to save little Shocky — whom "God forgot" — from being bound out, like his sister Hannah. And this was achieved by the help of the same colt and the schoolmaster, who rode at dawn, with Shocky in his arms, to Lewisburg, and found a refuge for him there with Miss Nancy Sawyer, the old maid who was a sort of benediction to the community. As the schoolmaster took the feverish little boy in his arms, for the long ride to Lewisburg, Shocky looked up in his face and said: "You see, Mr. Hartsook, I thought God had forgot. But he ha'n't."

Bud Means's secret notification to the schoolmaster to flee from the community, the minds of which had been subtly instigated against him; Ralph's finding Squire Hawkins in Clifty, a neighboring village, and asking the Squire to arrest and try him there; and the public trial in the large schoolhouse in Clifty, all of whose inhabitants, as well as those of Flat Creek, attended, — bring the narrative to the various phases of the strangely conflicting testimony given

in the trial. The testimony of Walter Johnson, a medical student in Dr. Small's office, was peculiarly uncertain, due to the fact that the weak and wavering Johnson, who had been an eye-witness of the robbery and was sworn to secrecy by Dr. Small, the actual head of an organized gang of thieves, — had been taken by the astute Bud to hear the Rev. Mr. Soden (the scoffers called him "Brother Sodom"). "Brother Sodom's" sulphurous preaching had so aroused the conscience of young Johnson that, on the witness stand, despite the intimidating glances of Dr. Small, he had made a full confession, exonerating the schoolmaster and directly implicating the doctor and the Joneses. Through Bud's influence, also, Hank Banta, the old-time enemy of the schoolmaster, confessed that his own testimony had been false; and even old Jack Means, the school trustee, who had always had a warm side for the master, proposed three cheers for him at the conclusion of the trial. But Mrs. Means gave it as her opinion that "Jack Means allers wuz a fool!"

Old Jack Means in his function of school trustee, Bud, as a founder of the church militant, and Rev. Mr. Bosaw, the unctuous "Hardshell" preacher; the pathetic and poetic little Shocky, the pale and patient bound girl, Hannah, and the giggling "Mirandy"; the one-legged basket-maker who "fit" at Lundy's Lane and believed in the general selfishness of mankind; the Squire whose eyes turned different ways and who was an authority on spelling; and the strenuous little schoolmaster himself, — these figures for a long time to come will be associated in the minds of the reading world with the crude and lawless conditions of pioneer life in Southern Indiana.

CHAPTER XIV

"MAIN-TRAVELED ROADS" BY HAMLIN GARLAND

"Main-Traveled Roads" has a significant dedication. It reads: "To my father and mother, whose half-century pilgrimage on the main-traveled road of life has brought them only toil and deprivation, this book of stories is dedicated by a son to whom every day brings a deepening sense of his parents' silent heroism." In fact, the strenuous early life of Mr. Garland himself, in Wisconsin and on the prairies of Iowa, gave him certain hard and vivid experiences that later made him so sympathetic with the grim and tedious lives of a farmer's family in the great Northwest.

A writer in the *Atlantic Monthly*, in speaking of the effect produced upon him by the book under consideration, said: "The best proof of the solid merit of 'Main-Traveled Roads' is that, in spite of all, it convinces the reader, willy-nilly, of its general fidelity to fact, and lifts him off his critical feet by its sheer brute force. . . . It shows strikingly what may be done by strong native talent, working with the help of a single sound formula for effective composition; for here most emphatically Mr. Garland has written of what he knows. The book is unique in American literature; passionate, vivid, written with absolute certainty of touch, native and virile as the red man." And Mr. Howells, also bearing witness to the essential truthfulness of the book, wrote in *Harper's Magazine*: "These stories are full of the

bitter and burning dust, the foul and trampled slush, of the common avenues of life, the life of the men who hopelessly and cheerlessly make the wealth that enriches the alien and the idler, and impoverishes the producer."

In the opening of the first sketch in "Main-Traveled Roads," called "A Branch Road," one gets a fine sense of the freedom and sweetness of that hour in the country when the night is losing its sway, — the grass was crisp with frost, the air was stimulating and resonant, the autumn maples were flaming amid the still green oaks, and above the timber belt in the east rose swiftly "a vast dome of pale undazzling gold." "In the windless September dawn a voice went ringing clear and sweet, a man's voice, singing a cheap and common air." Such is the note of spontaneous joy breathed out by nature and human nature in unison, — in what suggestive contrast to the later depression and grimness of the story!

The singing voice was that of a young man on his way to help a neighbor do his "thrashing," a time of the intensest work for the farmer, who is then getting into final shape the product of his spring and summer's labor. As Will Hannan, carrying his pitchfork, came in sight of his neighbors, he could see the horses in a circle, hitched to the ends of the six sweeps, and the great red and gold-striped threshing machine standing among the stacks. Will and his rival, Ed Kinney, took their places on the highest stack, and the voice of big David McTurg, the owner of the thresher, was heard calling out as the men raised the long stacker into position. "Come, come, every sucker of yeh, git hold o' something. All ready." And then, to use the words of Mr. Garland himself in describing this typical, strenuous phase of Western farm life: "Boo-oo-oo-oom, Boo-woo-woo-

oom-oom-ow-owm, yarr, yarr! The whirling cylinder boomed, roared, and snarled as it rose in speed. At last, when its tone became a rattling yell, David nodded to the pitchers and rasped his hands together. The sheaves began to fall from the stack; the band-cutter, knife in hand, slashed the bands in twain; and the feeder, with easy, majestic movement, gathered them under his arm and rolled them out into an even belt of entering wheat, on which the cylinder tore with its smothered, ferocious snarl."

It was only the night before that Agnes Dingman, whose father was having his wheat threshed, had given Will Hannan an assurance of her love; and so he worked steadily on the stack beside Ed Kinney with a secure sense of triumph that made him perfectly happy. But Agnes's open preference for himself at dinner-time, and her pleasant, smiling ways with some of the other men, in some way irritated and maddened the lover in his peculiarly sensitive mood; and later he was almost plunged into a quarrel with one of the threshers, because of remarks about Agnes's evident liking for him. He worked savagely on during the rest of the day, resenting, with a sense of ownership in her, every pleasant attention she received from the other men. Even when she came out near his stack, looking very pretty in her straw hat, and seeking an explanation for his strange attitude toward her, he worked fiercely on, with his hat pulled over his eyes, and with barely a notice of her. At the end of the day, when all stayed for supper at the Dingmans, Will refused an invitation to wait and eat with the rest, but turned away hungry and tired, — "so tired he stumbled and so unhappy he wept."

It was another beautiful dawn, and Will was busily washing the mud from his brother's carriage, preparatory to

taking his sweetheart Agnes to the county fair, — an arrangement to that effect having been made with her the Sunday before. He had not seen her, however, since Monday, — the day of the threshing, — and it was now Thursday. He sang at his work; "he had regained his real self, and, having passed through a bitter period of shame, was now joyous with anticipation of forgiveness. He looked forward to the day, with its chances of doing a thousand little things to show his regret and his love."

Will, in his best suit, sprang into the carriage, after an early breakfast, and started off with the lively colts for Agnes Dingman's home, where he had arranged to meet her at eight o'clock. But on the way, by an unfortunate accident, he was delayed till ten o'clock. He imagined his sweetheart as tearful and pouting, and as sitting by the window with her hat and gloves on, waiting for him after the others had gone. Alas for human illusions! when the lover drove up, no smiling or tearful face waited at the window; the house was silent, and the curtains down. Something rose chokingly in his throat; he called "Agnes," and announced that he was "here at last." There was no response. Suddenly an old man came round the corner, grinning as he came, and said, "She ain't here. She's gone." To Will's amazed inquiry, "Who'd she go with?" the old man answered, with a malicious grin, "Ed Kinney. I guess your goose is cooked." And this was the expected sweetness of reconciliation with Agnes! He lashed his horses into a run; his face was white and his teeth were set; and when once more at home he wrote this savage, brutal letter to the gentle girl that really loved him: "If you want to go to hell with Ed Kinney, you can. I won't say a word. That's where he'll take you. You won't see me again." He knew

it would tear and sear an innocent, happy heart, but that thought was a wicked satisfaction to him as he rode away in the train to the South.

Seven years of hard but successful life among the cliffs and treeless swells of the Southwest, and Will Hannan was back in his boyhood home, among the trees and rustling cornfields and cattle pastures of Southern Wisconsin. The very crickets and peacefully feeding cattle were dear to him; and the softened sound of the distant reaper seemed like "the hum of a bluebottle fly buzzing heedlessly about his ears." Retrospective and repentant, he was filled with a sort of strange sadness and despair. As he waited by the roadside for the passing of a drove of cattle he recognized in the hard-featured old driver the father of his early rival, Ed Kinney. Will innocently inquired of the old man the whereabouts of Will Hannan. "William? Oh! he's a bad aig — he lit out f'r the West somewhere. He was a hard boy. He stole a hatful o' my plums once. He left home kind o' sudden. He! he! I s'pose he was purty well cut up jest about them days." The old man chuckled and continued: "Well, y' see, they was both courtin' Agnes then, an' my son cut William out. Then William he lit out f'r the West, Arizony, 'r California, 'r somewhere out West. Never been back sence."

Will walked on until he came to the old home of Agnes, his former sweetheart. "The barn had been moved away, the garden plowed up, and the house, turned into a granary, stood with boards nailed across its dusty, cobwebbed windows. The tears started into the man's eyes. . . . In the face of this house the seven years that he had last lived stretched away into a wild waste of time. It stood as a symbol of his wasted, ruined life. It was personal, inti-

mately personal, this decay of her home." And his mind reverted to that last impression of the Dingman home — the roar of the threshing machine, the whistle of the driver, the shouts of the men, and the streaming lamplight as he turned away from the door, "tired, hungry, sullen with rage and jealousy. Oh, if he had only had the courage of a man!" But his old sweetheart — he must see her just once more.

The next morning Will drove up to her home. It had been his own home until it passed from his mother's possession into the hands of old Kinney. There he had been born, and there his mother had toiled for thirty years. It was a strange meeting — this coming together of old-time lovers in a quick recognition that love was not yet dead. Will explained his identity to Ed's old father and mother, the latter exclaiming: "Dew tell! I want 'o know! Wal, I never! An' you're my little Willy boy who ust 'o be in my class? Well! Well! W'y, pa, ain't he growed tall! Grew handsome tew. I ust to think he was a *dretful* humly boy; but my sakes, that mustache —"

But what a change in the old Agnes, with the dimples and the sunny hair! She was now plainly a farmer's house drudge. "She was worn and wasted incredibly. The blue of her eyes seemed dimmed and faded by weeping, and the old-time scarlet of her lips had been washed away. The sinews of her neck showed painfully when she turned her head, and her trembling hands were worn, discolored, and lumpy at the joints." As she moved about, getting dinner at the demand of the old people, Will listened gloomily to the "clack" of the old man, and observed the details of the room. It was a poor little "sitting room," with furniture "worn and shapeless; hardly a touch of pleasant color, save

here and there a little bit of Agnes's handiwork. The lounge, covered with calico, was rickety; the rocking-chair matched it, and the carpet of rags was patched and darned with twine in twenty places. Everywhere was the influence of the Kinneys. The furniture looked like them, in fact."

Suddenly old Mrs. Kinney's hawklike eyes discovered something unheard-of: "Well, I declare, if you hain't put the butter on in one o' my blue chainy saucers? Now you *know* I don't allow that saucer to be took down by nobody. I don't see what's got into yeh! Anybody'd s'pose you never see any comp'ny b'fore — wouldn't they, pa?" "Sh'd say th' would," said pa. "Seems as if we couldn't keep anything in this house sep'rit from the rest." Accidentally Agnes dropped a plate, the crash of which started Granny Kinney once more. "*Good* land o' Goshen!" she screamed. "If you ain't the worst I *ever* see. I'll bet that's my grape-vine plate. If it is— Well, of all the mercies, it ain't. But it might 'a' ben. I never see your beat — never! that's the third plate since I came to live here." In the midst of all this exasperating and characteristic criticism, there sounded unexpectedly the brutal voice of Agnes's husband, Ed, who had come home for his Sunday dinner after a horse trade at a neighbor's: "What the devul is all this row about? Agg, can't you get along without stirring up the old folks every time I'm out o' the house?" Ed, clad in greasy overalls and a hickory shirt, lounged in with insolent swagger, and greeted his old-time rival with easy familiarity. Then he led the way to dinner. "Well, let's go out and set up. Come, Dad, sling away that Bible and come to grub. Mother, what the devul are you snifflin' at? Say, now, look here! if I hear any more about this row, I'll simply let you walk down to meetin'."

The dinner conversation was of the same humiliating and fault-finding tone. When Ed discovered that it was only a white dish that his wife had broken, he cut short his mother's whining criticism of her daughter-in-law with a somewhat vigorous protest: "Well, now, I'll git into that dog-gasted cubberd some day an' break the whole eternal outfit. I ain't goin' to have this damned jawin' goin' on." After dinner, as Ed drove away with his old father and mother for the "meetin'," the latter screamed at her daughter-in-law: "Don't you leave them dishes f'r me to wash. An' if we don't git home by five, them caaves orter be fed."

Out of this heart-sickening round of drudgery and abuse, Will Hannan persuaded Agnes to go with him, — leaving a loveless husband and a dreary house, but taking with her her little child. Through the open door he pointed to the sunlight shining on a field of wheat: "That's where I'll take you, — out into the sunshine," the sunshine of renewed hope and appreciative love. And forgetful of the mistaken past, of social custom, and of public prejudice, they went forth together, into a wider world of new life.

In the story called "Up the Coolly" has been drawn a pitiless picture of a risen man, who for ten years has been practically indifferent to the conditions surrounding his mother and brother out upon a Western farm; and the successful man on his return to his old home is a good deal irritated and chagrined by the attitude of his brother, who in the meantime has been struggling in a grinding poverty and a hopeless condition of debt. The welcome given by the Western brother is grudging and surly — he has had to bear the long heat and heavy burden of the day, until he is past the best possibilities of his life, which has settled into a

sullen despair. "The Return of the Private" presents that truly pathetic side of the Civil War — so often unconsidered amid the reverberations of successful battles — in which the poor and unknown soldier returns to wring a hard subsistence from the furrows he abandoned for his country's good; while "Under the Lion's Paw" is the depressing story of a farm mortgage and the crushing injustice of compelling a poor renter to pay for his own improvements.

What the poor man, unknown and broken in health, returned to at the close of the Civil War, is grimly and pathetically portrayed in the "Return of a Private," whose opening picture is that of a group of veterans expectantly nearing their home county of La Crosse, in Wisconsin. On the train from New Orleans they had relieved the tedium of the long journey by jests and raillery and elaborate discussion of their future plans, now that peace was come; and at their entrance on Wisconsin territory, and again at Madison, their enthusiasm took the form of a cheer. But as they neared La Crosse, the four or five remaining soldiers grew thoughtful and silent. They were gaunt and brown, and one was pale with the effects of fever and ague still upon him. One carried a scar, another was lame, and all had the preternatural brightness of eye that goes with emaciation.

In suggestive contrast to their setting out, their homecoming was lacking in bands of music and the waving of ladies' handkerchiefs — the enthusiasm of a spectacle was gone; and not even the loafers at the depots where the freight train with its caboose stopped gave any heed to this grimy, dusty contingent in blue, now become so familiar. Being a freight train, it naturally was behind time, and it was two o'clock in the morning before the travel-worn soldiers heard the engine whistle "down brakes" for La Crosse.

Here they were, in the dead of night, on the station platform — poor farmers whose homes were several miles out in the districts adjoining the town. The man who showed signs of fever and ague, Private Smith, remarked economically: "We've got to stay somewhere till mornin'. Now, I ain't got no two dollars to waste on a hotel. I've got a wife and children, so I'm goin' to roost on a bench and take the cost of a bed out of my hide." "Same here," said another of the group. "Hide 'll grow on again, dollars come hard. It's goin' to be mighty hot skirmishin' to find a dollar these days." A third sarcastically inquired, "Don't think they'll be a deputation of citizens waitin' to 'scort us to a hotel, eh?" One of the younger men was so desperately extravagant as to think it necessary to go to a hotel. "I'm goin' to a hotel, ef I don't never lay up a cent." On Private Smith's observation that that would hardly do for one who had a wife and three "young uns" dependent on him, the younger man cheerfully exclaimed, "Which I ain't, thank the Lord! and don't intend havin' while the court knows itself."

The chilly and deserted waiting-room at the station, lighted by flaring oil lamps, made a forlorn and uncomfortable resting-place for the old soldiers; but in the midst of their hard economy a characteristic thoughtfulness shone out. By robbing themselves, the other soldiers somewhat softened with their blankets the bench on which Private Smith, the sick man, attempted to sleep. The two men, sitting with bowed heads in the chilly night air, grew stiff with cold and weariness, and now and then rose and walked about to relieve their uncomfortable situation. Private Smith, lying stretched on his hard and narrow bench, found it difficult to sleep, and his mind went wandering out to his

half-cleared farm, with its insatiable mortgage ready to swallow half his earnings. And here he was, — after three years of his life had been given to his country on a mere pittance of pay, — broken in body and despondent in heart, compelled to look the grim situation in the face. Toward dawn he fell asleep, his head resting on his knapsack, his thin face turned toward the ceiling, his hands clasped over his breast; and the unconscious figure was touched with an indefinable effect of mute and pathetic weakness.

In strange contrast to the ugliness of the station and the unkempt appearance of the weary-looking men was the beauty and the sweetness of the dawn. "Morning dawned at last, slowly, with a pale yellow dome of light rising silently above the bluffs, which stand like some huge storm-devastated castle, just east of the city. Out to the left the great river swept on its massive yet silent way to the south. Blue-jays called across the water from hillside to hillside through the clear, beautiful air, and hawks began to skim the tops of the hills." The older men had gone out, taking great care not to waken their sick comrade; and when he was finally roused by the switching of an engine, he folded up his blankets and went out to find his companions.

They stood silently gazing at the familiar river and the hills. "Looks natcher'l, don't it?" they said to him, as he came out. "That's what it does. An' it looks good. D'yeh see that peak?" He pointed to a beautiful, symmetrical peak that seemed to overtop the rest. "It was touched by the morning sun and it glowed like a beacon, and a light scarf of gray morning fog was rolling up its shadowed side." Private Smith added that just beyond the peak lay his own farm, and that if he could only "ketch a ride" he would be home by dinner time. But one of his

companions suggested that it was breakfast, rather than dinner, time he was thinking of; whereupon Private Smith resignedly remarked, "I guess it's one more meal o' hardtack f'r me." At a restaurant they got some coffee to "wash down" their army ration, and Smith, holding up a piece of hardtack by the corner, commented prophetically, "Time'll come, when this'll be a curiosity."

"I hope to God it will! I bet I've chawed hardtack enough to shingle every house in the coolly. . . . I've took it dry, soaked, and mashed. I've had it wormy, musty, sour, and blue-moldy. I've had it in little bits and big bits; 'fore coffee an' after coffee. I'm ready f'r a change. I'd like t' git holt jest about now o' some of the hot biscuits my wife c'n make when she lays herself out f'r company." It was remarked somewhat sarcastically that if the speaker "set there gabblin'" any longer, he would never see his wife. With characteristic American humor under difficulties, Private Smith invited them to drink, — but it wasn't whisky. "Wait a moment, boys; less take suthin'. It's on me." He led the way to a rusty tin dipper hanging by the side of a wooden water-pail, and with a humorous grin they all drank. Then shouldering their blankets and muskets they started out on their last march, — the march to the home farms.

Along the turnpike and up the winding river road they kept together. "The river was very lovely, curving down along its sandy beds, pausing now and then under broad basswood trees, or running in dark, swift, silent currents under tangles of wild grapevines, and drooping alders, and haw trees." At one of these beautiful spots along the river bank the three veterans sat down to rest, largely "on Smith's account." "I tell yeh, boys, this knocks the swamps of

Loueesiana into kingdom come." And the reply came: "You bet. All they c'n raise down there is snakes, niggers, and p'rticler hell." "An' fightin' men," suggested the older man. "An' fightin' men. If I had a good hook an' line I'd sneak a pick'rel out o' that pond. Say, remember that time I shot that alligator —." "I guess we'd better be crawlin' along," interrupted Smith, rising and shouldering his knapsack with an effort that he tried to conceal. With a practical sympathy born of long comradeship, one of his companions suggested, "Say, Smith, lemme give you a lift on that." "I guess I c'n manage," said Smith, unwilling to seem a burden. "Course. But, yo' see, I may not have a chance right off to pay yeh back for the times you've carried my gun and hull caboodle. Say, now, gimme that gun, anyway." And Smith, rather reluctantly, yielded it up to his insistent companion.

As they plodded doggedly along through the increasing heat of the sun, it seemed strange to Smith that no teams were passing; and when a comrade recalled that it was Sunday morning, Smith exultingly thought of how he would be home in time for Sunday dinner. "Well," said old Jim Cranby, with a relish in his voice, "Well, I'll git home jest about six o'clock, jest about when the boys are milkin' the cows. I'll step into the barn an' then I'll say: 'He*ah!* why ain't this milkin' done before this time o' day?' An' then won't they yell!"

And then Private Smith pictured his home-coming. "I'll jest go up the path. Old Rover'll come down the road to meet me. He won't bark; he'll know me, an' he'll come down waggin' his tail an' showin' his teeth. That's his way of laughin'. An' so I'll walk up to the kitchen door, an' I'll say, '*Dinner* f'r a hungry man!' An' then she'll jump

up, an'—." But his voice choked. And Saunders, the third man, hardly spoke as he walked silently behind the others; for the first year of his service he had lost his wife, who died of pneumonia due to exposure in the autumn rains, when she worked in the fields in place of her husband.

At last they came to the parting of the ways, and as they grounded their muskets Smith remarked: "Well, boys, here's where we shake hands. We've marched together a good many miles, an' now I s'pose we're done. I hope I'll see yeh once in a while, boys, to talk over old times." "Of course," said Saunders, with a quaver in his voice, "it ain't *exactly* like dyin'." And they all found it hard to look at one another. Cranby and Saunders expressed their anxiety about Smith's further journey alone, and offered to go with him; but he characteristically made light of it, rather cheerfully exclaiming: "Oh, I'm all right! Don't worry about me. Every step takes me nearer home, yeh see. Well, good-by, boys." They shook hands, with "good-by" and "good luck"; and just before his two comrades passed out of sight he waved his cap to them, and they to him, and all shouted.

On his lonely and toilsome journey his mind was filled with sad memories of his dead "chum," Billy Tripp, whom a wailing "minie" ball had struck through the heart. He fell face forward in the dirt of the plowed field they were marching across; and now Private Smith must break the news to Billy's mother and sweetheart. Yet anticipations of home gradually conquered the shadows of retrospect; the fields and houses grew familiar; now and then he was greeted by people who recognized him from their doorways, and once he accepted a drink of milk at a neighbor's well-side. He labored on through the burning sun, up the slope,

occasionally stopping to rest. "He crawled along like some minute, wingless variety of fly." When he reached the summit of the ridge he tried some of the same old hard-tack, this time relieved by the juice of wild berries; and as he sat there resting he could at last look down into his own home coolly.

Here was the typical figure of the war-worn man, who represented in his experience how many thousands, returning from blood and suffering only to be plunged into the almost harder fate of a strenuous battle against poverty and loss. To use Mr. Garland's words in describing this lonely figure: "His wide, round gray eyes gazed down into the beautiful valley, seeing and not seeing the splendid cloud-shadows sweeping over the western hills and across the green and yellow wheat far below. His head drooped forward on his palm, his shoulders took on a tired stoop, his cheek-bones showed painfully. An observer might have said, 'He is looking down on his own grave.'"

At the Smith farm on that Sunday morning Mrs. Smith was alone with her three children. Her farm, rented to a neighbor, lay at the head of a coolly, or narrow gully, on either side of which rose the great hills left standing by the plowshare of the floods. Wakened from dreams of her absent husband by the noises of the chickens, she went out into the yard, the fowls clustering about her as she went; "a cow called in a deep, musical bass, and a calf answered from a little pen near by, and a pig scurried guiltily out of the cabbages." Seeing the effects of neglect all about her,—the straying pig, the tangled grass in the garden, the broken fence which she had mended again and again,—the little woman sat down and cried.

It was only a few years before that they had bought the

farm, paying for it in part and mortgaging the rest; and her husband had worked "nights and Sundays" to clear the farm of its brush and its insatiable mortgage. Suddenly came the call of the country for help, and Edward Smith "threw down his scythe and grub ax, turned his cattle loose, and became a blue-coated cog in a vast machine for killing men and not thistles." And the little wife left behind had had her special burden and sorrow through the three years of her husband's service. Two brothers had been killed; the renter in whose hands her husband had left the farm had proved a villain; one year the farm had had no crops, and now the overripe grain was waiting till the new renter had cared for his own crop.

Six weeks before a letter had come, telling of her husband's discharge in the near future; the papers had brought news that the army was disbanding; and from day to day blue-coated survivors were returning to the county, — but *her* hero was not among them. Each week she had told the children he was coming, and she had watched the road so long for his approach that now her eyes unconsciously wandered down the coolly road from wherever she stood. This morning Mrs. Smith's disappointment and loneliness became intolerable; so that, as some measure of relief, she dressed the little folks in their best calico dresses and home-made jackets, and set off down the coolly for the home of her neighbor, "Widder" Gray, who was the "visible incarnation of hospitality and optimistic poverty."

The open-hearted, smiling widow came down the path to meet Mrs. Smith and her children, exclaiming as she came, "Oh, you little dears! come right to your granny. Gimme a kiss! Come right in, Mis' Smith. How are yeh, anyway? Nice mornin', ain't it? Come in an' set down. Everything's

in a clutter, but that won't scare you any." And she led the way into the " best room,"— a sunny, square one, — its floor covered with a faded and patched rag carpet and its walls with a white-and-green-striped paper ; while here and there " faded effigies of dead members of the family hung in variously sized oval walnut frames."

It was a noisy, breezy, hospitable home that Mrs. Smith and her children had come to visit, and its enlivening influence was irresistible. There was laughter and singing, and Mrs. Smith, in the midst of it, forgot her anxiety and laughed and smiled herself. Toward noon the widow's eldest son arrived, with all his family, from Sand Lake Coolly, and the widow began giving orders. " Well, go put out your team, an' go'n bring me in some taters; an', Sim, you go see if you c'n find some corn. Sadie, you put on the water to bile. Come, now, hustle yer boots, all o' yeh. If I feed this yer crowd, we've got to have some raw materials. If y' think I'm goin' to feed yeh on pie, you're jest mightily mistaken."

The children went off into the fields, the girls made some of the preparations for dinner in the kitchen, and then retired to change their dresses and " fix up," innocently remarking as they went that " somebody might come." In pretended dismay the breezy and knowing mother exclaimed : " Land sakes, I *hope* not ! I don't know where in time I'd set 'em, 'less they'd eat at the second table." Out on the grass before the house the widow's two older boys, who had served their time in the army, were whittling and talking about the war, the crops, and the buying of a threshing machine ; while the older girls and Mrs. Smith helped in enlarging the dinner table, putting on the dishes, and swelling the sum total of good-natured but rather incoherent conversation.

Finally, the widow had them all for audience in her dissertation on girls in love, and their uselessness. "Girls in love ain't no use in the whole blessed week," she said. "Sundays they're a-lookin' down the road, expectin' he'll *come*. Sunday afternoons they can't think o' nothin' else 'cause he's *here*. Monday mornin's they're sleepy and kind o' dreamy and slimpsy, and good f'r nothin' on Tuesday and Wednesday. Thursday they git absent-minded, an' begin to look off toward Sunday agin, an' mope aroun' an' let the dish water git cold, right under their noses. Friday they break dishes, an' go off in the best room an' snivel an' look out o' the winder. Saturdays they have queer spurts o' workin' like all p'ssessed, an' spurts o' frizzin' their hair. An' Sunday they begin it all over agin." Whereat the girls giggled and blushed, and Mrs. Smith remarked that she ought not to stay to dinner in view of prospective guests. "Now you set right down!" said Mrs. Gray, insistently. "If any of them girls' beaus comes, they'll have to take what's left, that's all. They ain't s'posed to have much appetite, nohow. No, you're goin' to stay if they starve, an' they ain't no danger o' that."

At one o'clock one of the girls took down a conch-shell from a nail and blew a long, free blast that brought the children from "the forest of corn," from the creek, the barn-loft, and the garden. "They come to their feed f'r all the world jest like the pigs when y' holler 'poo-ee!' See 'em scoot!" said Mrs. Gray, aglow with the sight. The men "soused" their faces in the cold, hard water of the horse-trough; and in a few moments the groaning table, piled with boiled potatoes, boiled corn on the cob, squash and pumpkin pies, and hot biscuit and honey, was surrounded with a merry crowd of ardent eaters, a row of

hungry-eyed youngsters in the kitchen looking on and waiting their impatient turn.

The widow informed the strenuous circle of diners that she couldn't afford to give the "young uns" tea, as she was reserving it for the "women-folks, and 'specially f'r Mis' Smith an' Bill's wife. We're a-goin' to tell fortunes by it." One by one the men became satisfied and withdrew, and one by one the eager-eyed children took their places, and by two o'clock the women were left to themselves around the "débris-covered" table, and free to sip their tea and settle their fortunes. As they got well down to the grounds in the cup, they shook them with a circular motion in the hand, and then turned them bottom-side up quickly in the saucer; then twirled them three or four times one way, and three or four times the other, during a breathless pause. Then Mrs. Gray lifted the cup, and gazing into it with profound gravity, pronounced the impending fate.

At last came Mrs. Smith's turn, and she trembled with excitement as Mrs. Gray composed her naturally jovial face into an appropriate solemnity of expression. "Somebody's comin' to *you*," said the prophetess, after a long pause. "He's got a musket on his back. He's a soldier. He's almost here. See?" She pointed to two little tea stems that formed a faint resemblance to a man with a musket on his back, and he had climbed nearly to the edge of the cup. Mrs. Smith was pale with suppressed excitement, and the cup shook in her hand as she gazed into it. Suddenly Mrs. Gray cried out: "It's Ed. He's on the way home. Heavens an' earth! There he is now!" She waved her hand in the direction of the road, and there, in very truth, was a man in blue with a musket on his back, toiling slowly up the hill, his bent head half hidden by his knapsack. So

toilsome was his step that walking seemed indeed "a process of falling"; yet so eager was he to get home that he would not stop, nor look aside, but "plodded on amid the cries of the locusts, the welcome of the crickets, and the rustle of the yellow wheat. Getting back to God's country, and his wife and babies!"

The little wife, laughing, crying, and calling to him and the children at the same time, snatched her hat and ran out into the yard; but by the time the children had been found the soldier had disappeared over the hilltop, beyond the reach of her voice. Yet there was the doubt that it might not be her husband, after all, for the man refused to turn his head at their shouts; and if it had been Edward Smith he would hardly have passed his old neighbor's without stopping to rest. Wavering between hope and doubt, the little woman hurried up the coolly as fast as she could push the baby-wagon, the blue-coated figure moving steadily on ahead.

When the panting little group came in sight of the gate, they saw the figure in army blue leaning upon the rail fence, his chin resting on his palms and his eyes gazing at the empty house, while at his feet in the grass lay his knapsack, canteen, and blankets. He stood lost in a dream, and his hungry eyes seemed fairly to devour the scene, — the rough lawn, the little unpainted house, the field of yellow wheat behind it, and over it all the level light of the westering sun. Here was a haunt of old-time peace that the eyes of his imagination had often seen in the last three struggling years. "O God! how far removed from all camps, hospitals, battle lines! A little cabin in a Wisconsin coolly, but it was majestic in its peace."

Trembling and weak with emotion, her eyes fixed on the

silent figure, Mrs. Smith hurried noiselessly through the dust and grass, her oldest boy a little in advance. "Who *are* you, sir?" the little woman started to ask; but suddenly the pale face of the private turned full upon her and the cry of "Emma!" broke from his lips. "Edward!" was all she could answer, as she sobbingly kissed this strange and bearded man, the daughter Mary sobbing in sympathy with her mother. Illness had left the soldier partly deaf, and this increased the strangeness of his manner. Even after the girl had kissed her father, the youngest child refused to come to him, and backing away under the fence stood peering at him critically. The father called "my little man" in vain. Alas! between him and his baby war had come, and left him only a strange man with big eyes, a soldier with mother hanging to his arm and talking to him in an excited voice. "And this is Tom," said the father, drawing the older boy to him. "*He'll* come and see me! *He* knows his poor old pap when he comes home from the war!"

Recognizing the pain and remonstrance in her husband's voice, the mother hastened to explain: "You've changed so, Ed. He can't know yeh. This is papa, Teddy; come and kiss him — Tom and Mary do. Come, won't you?" But Teddy still peered through the fence with investigating eyes, well out of reach. "He resembled a half-wild kitten that hesitates, studying the tones of one's voice." "I'll fix him," said the soldier, suddenly recalling some of his resources in the knapsack. Sitting down, he undid his knapsack and drew out three great red apples. Giving one to each of the older children, he cried: "*Now* I guess he'll come. Eh, my little man? Now come see your pap!" Teddy crept slowly under the fence, assisted by his zealous older brother, and soon was kicking in his father's arms.

Then together they entered the house, going into the "sitting room," poor and bare, with its rag carpet, its two or three chromos, and its pictures from *Harper's Weekly* pinned about upon the walls.

Once in his own home again, the exhausted soldier flung himself down upon the carpet as he used to do, while his wife brought a pillow to put under his head, and the children stood about munching their apples. And then the soldier talked, question after question pouring forth with regard to crops and cattle, the renter and the neighbors. He slipped off the great government brogans from his tired and blistered feet, and stretched himself in utter and blessed relaxation, feeling no longer the stress of a soldier under command. At supper he stopped and listened and smiled — it was old Spot, the cow, that he heard. And then came the inquiry for the old dog Rover. Learning that he had died the winter before, probably by poison, the soldier, after a pause of saddened memory, spoke with trembling feeling in his voice: "Poor old feller! He'd 'a' known me half a mile away. I expected him to come down the hill to meet me. It 'ud 'a' been more like comin' home if I could 'a' seen him comin' down the road, an' waggin' his tail, an' laughin' that way he has. I tell yeh, it kind o' took hold o' me to see the blinds down an' the house shut up."

Such was the pathos of his home-coming; but now even the sound of the chickens out in the yard was sweet to him, and of the turkeys and the crickets. "Do you know they don't have just the same kind o' crickets down South?" And then he thought of the grain ready to cut, and of his own inability to do anything, on account of the fever and ague that now had him in its grip. "I don't know when I'll get rid of it. I'll bet I've took twenty-five pounds of

quinine if I've taken a bit. Gimme another biscuit. I tell yeh, they taste good, Emma. I hain't had anything like it — Say, if you'd 'a' hear'd me braggin' to th' boys about your butter 'n' biscuits, I'll bet your ears 'ud 'a' burnt." The gratification of the private's wife was seen in her deepening color, as she modestly said: "Oh, you're always a-braggin' about your things. Everybody makes good butter." "Yes; old lady Snyder, for instance." "Oh, well, she ain't to be mentioned. She's Dutch." "Or old Mis' Snively. One more cup o' tea, Mary. That's my girl! I'm feeling better already. I just b'lieve the matter with me is, I'm *starved*."

That was one of the sweet hours in the lives of the private and his wife — they were lovers again; but their tenderness was in tones rather than in words. His praise of her biscuit, she knew, was praise of herself. He showed her how near the bullets had brought him to death, and she shuddered to think how near she came to being a soldier's widow. Finally, they rose and went out together into the garden, and down to the barn, and he stood beside her as she milked old Spot. And there they planned for fields and crops another year. His farm was weedy, a renter had run off with his machinery, his children needed clothing, he was sick and thin and weak; but the heroic soul that fought on Southern battlefields, because it thought that there lay the safety of the nation, took up its daily fight against nature and debt and injustice with the same unflinching resolution.

"Oh, that mystic hour! the pale man with big eyes standing there by the well, with his young wife by his side. The vast moon swinging above the eastern peaks, the cattle winding down the pasture slopes with jangling bells, the crickets singing, the stars blooming out sweet and far and

serene; the katydids rhythmically calling, the little turkeys crying querulously as they settled to roost in the poplar tree near the open gate. The voices at the well drop lower, the little ones nestle in their father's arms at last, and Teddy falls asleep there." Surely, here is a real picture, — this first night of the private's return; and here are real provincial types, — the poor young farmer, filled with sturdy patriotism, and returning to a life burdened with disease and debt; the quick-hearted, driving, breezy, and motherly Widow Gray; and the long-suffering, brave, and patiently waiting little farmer's wife, whose heroism was in some regards more difficult than that of her sick and war-worn husband.

One of the most characteristic and pathetic sketches in the book is that of "Mrs. Ripley's Trip," in which is set forth with delicate and intimate sympathy the resolute endeavor of old Mrs. Ripley to pay a visit "back to her folks in York State." She and her husband, Uncle Ethan Ripley, were sitting, one windy November night, in their poor little shanty, "set like a chicken-trap on the vast Iowa prairie." She was knitting a stocking for her little grandson, after having "finished the supper dishes," and Uncle Ethan was mending his old violin. The only light was a tallow candle, — they could afford "none o' them new-fangled lamps." The room was small, the chairs hard, the walls bare, — poverty was plainly an ever-present guest. Mrs. Ripley, looking pathetically small and hopeless in her faded, ill-fitting garments, knitted tirelessly with her knotted, stiffened fingers, but in her little black eyes sparkled a peculiar light, and "in the straight line of her withered and shapeless lips" there was written an unusual resoluteness.

Suddenly she stopped, and, looking at her husband, said

decisively: " Ethan Ripley, you'll haff to do your own cooking from now on to New Year's. I'm goin' back to Yaark State." Uncle Ethan was naturally amazed, and the question of the cost at once leaped to the first place in the old man's mind. The financial consideration seemed to him to put the whole idea out of the question. Her intimation that she would get the money herself, and that if she waited for him to pay her way the visit would never take place, aroused the old man to self-defense, in which he insisted he had done his part. " I don't know what y' call doin' my part, Ethan Ripley; but if cookin' for a drove of harvest hands and thrashin' hands, takin' care o' the eggs and butter, 'n' diggin' taters an' milkin' ain't *my* part, I don't never expect to do my part, 'n' you might as well know it fust's last."

She declared she was now sixty years old, and had never had a day to herself, " not even Fourth o' July." " I ain't been away t' stay over night for thirteen years in this house, 'n' it was just so in Davis County for ten more. For twenty-three years, Ethan Ripley, I've stuck right to the stove an' churn without a day or a night off." And during every one of those years she had " just about promised " herself to go back and see her " folks."

After Tukey, the little grandson, had been sent upstairs to bed, the old man, with a sense of having been put in an ungenerous attitude toward his wife's going, said apologetically: " Wal, I'm just as willin' you should go as I am for myself, but if I ain't got no money I don't see how I'm goin' to send — " But his wife broke in upon him: " I don't want ye to send; nobody ast ye to, Ethan Ripley. I guess if I had what I've earnt since we came on this farm, I'd have enough to go to Jericho with." He insisted, how-

ever, though gently, that she had got as much out of it as he had. "Ain't I been wantin' to go back myself? And ain't I kep' still 'cause I see it wa'n't no use? I guess I've worked jest as long and as hard as you, an' in storms an' in mud an' heat, ef it comes t' that." To which his wife, though recognizing the justice of his remarks, replied rather pungently, "Wal, if you'd 'a' managed as well as I have, you'd have some money to go with."

The next day, in the midst of cold blustering weather, the old man was husking alone in the field, his gaunt figure covered with two or three ragged coats, his hands partly protected with gloves that lacked most of the fingers, his thumbs done up in "stalls," and his feet thrust into great coarse boots. His hands were wet with handling the ears of corn, and chapped and sore. Meditating on the subject of his wife's visit, he came to the generous conclusion that she really needed a "play-spell." "I ain't likely to be no richer next year than I am this one; if I wait till I'm able to send her she won't never go. I calc'late I c'n git enough out o' them shoats to send her. I'd kind a' lotted on eat'n' them pigs done up in sassengers, but if the ol' woman goes East, Tukey an' me'll kind a' haff to pull through without 'em. . . . Then there is my buffalo overcoat. I'd kind a' calc'lated on havin' a buffalo — but that's gone up the spout along with them sassengers."

Coming in that evening with a big armful of wood, which he let fall with a crash into the wood-box, he slapped his mittens together to knock off the ice and snow, and said: "I was tellin' Tukey t'-day that it was a dum shame our crops hadn't turned out better. An' when I saw ol' Hatfield go by I hailed him, an' asked him what he'd gimme for two o' m' shoats. Wal, the upshot is, I sent t' town for

some things I calc'late you'd need. An' here's a ticket to Georgetown, and ten dollars." Whereupon Mrs. Ripley, touched by the unexpected tenderness and sacrifice of her husband, broke down and sobbed. "She felt like kissing him, but she didn't."

The unaccustomed tears of his wife made the old man walk over and timidly touch her hair, explaining as he did so that he was going to sell the pigs anyway. Suddenly Mrs. Ripley sprang up, ran into the bedroom, and quickly returned with a yarn mitten, tied round the wrist, which she laid on the table with emphasis. "I don't want yer money. There's money enough to take me where I want to go." She emptied the contents of the mitten, and there on the table lay the savings of many years, mostly in silver dimes and quarters. "They's jest seventy-five dollars and thirty cents," she said proudly; "jest about enough to go back on. Ticket is fifty-five dollars, goin' and comin'. That leaves twenty dollars for other expenses, not countin' what I've already spent, which is six-fifty. It's plenty." She declared against such unnecessary expenses on the trip as sleepers and hotel bills. "I ain't agoin' to pay them pirates as much for a day's board as we'd charge for a week's, and have nawthin' to eat but dishes. I'm goin' to take a chicken an' some hard-boiled eggs, an' I'm goin' right through to Georgetown."

Her husband finally persuaded her to accept the ticket he had bought for her, — when she learned that the railroad company would refuse to take it back; and the next day they drove together to the little town where she was to take the train. The day was cold and raw, there was some snow on the ground, and the old people sat on a board laid across the wagon box, an old quilt or two drawn up over

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their laps. Mrs. Ripley wore a shawl over her head, and carried her queer little bonnet in her hand. Her last words to old Uncle Ethan were: "You'll find a jar o' sweet pickles an' some crab-apple sauce down suller, 'n' you'd better melt up brown sugar for 'lasses, 'n' for goodness' sake don't eat all them mince-pies up the fust week, 'n' see that Tukey ain't froze goin' to school. An' now you'd better get out for home. Good-by! an' remember them pies."

One cold winter's day a queer little figure was seen struggling along the country road, blocked here and there with drifts. It was Mrs. Ripley getting back from "Yaark State." She was laden with bundles, and every now and then the wind would twist her full-skirted black dress about her and sail her off into the deep snow outside the track. But she held bravely on till she reached a neighbor's gate. To an insistent invitation to stay, she energetically replied: "I must be gittin' back to Ripley. I expec' that man has jes let ev'ry thing go six ways f'r Sunday. . . . I s'pose they have had a gay time of it" (she meant the opposite of gay). "Wal, as I told Lizy Jane, I've had my spree, an' now I've got to git back to work. There ain't no rest for such as we are. . . . I've saw a pile o' this world, Mrs. Stacey — a pile of it! I didn't think they was so many big houses in the world as I saw b'tween here an' Chicago. . . . Good-by! I must be gittin' home to Ripley. He'll want his supper on time."

Uncle Ripley was at the barn when she arrived, and when he came in she had her "regimentals" on, the stove was brushed, the room swept, and she was deep in the dish-pan. "Hullo, mother! got back, hev yeh?" "I sh'd say it was about *time*," she answered curtly, without stopping her work.

"Has ol' 'Crumpy' dried up yit?" And Mrs. Ripley's long-considered trip was done.

Such laborious, patient, saving, and unselfish types as Uncle Ethan Ripley and his resolute little wife lend a pathos and heroic quality to the history of farm life in the great Northwest.

PROVINCIAL TYPES IN THE FAR WEST

CHAPTER XV

A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE FIELD

In such stories as the "Led-Horse Claim," "Cœur d'Alene," and "John Bodewin's Testimony," Mary Hallock Foote has presented various phases of Western mining life with sympathetic feeling and literary art; and in short stories like "The King of the Broncos," "The Bite of the Pichucuate," and "Bonifacio's Horse-Thief," Charles F. Lummis gives us vivid sketches of characteristic life on the plains of New Mexico and Arizona, — a remote region that he has made peculiarly his own by patient sympathy, long residence, and intimate study both of its past and its present. Together with Mr. Lummis, Frederic Remington, by his "Sundown Leflare," his "Crooked Trails," and his "Men with the Bark On," — and most of all by his remarkably life-like and vigorous illustrations, — has saved for us the rapidly changing types in the Southwestern states and territories. Such literary work as these two men have done deserves wide and long recognition for its uniqueness and virility, and for the fact that what it has sought to portray is almost aboriginal and rapidly passing away.

Although nothing else in the flood of very recent fiction

is included in the scope of the present volume, it was found impossible to pass by "The Virginian" by Owen Wister, because, in looking for a broad and convincing characterization of the "cow-puncher" of the Western plains, the mind irresistibly reverts to Miss Molly Wood's cowboy that rode and shot and won on the high plains of Wyoming. By his stories in "Red Men and White" and his more sustained effort in "Lin McLean," Mr. Wister, a Philadelphian and Harvard man, had served a long and careful apprenticeship in literary art as a preparation for this really great book on Western life and character. And his years of close familiarity with the wide, wild country that reaches from the plains of Wyoming to the "painted desert" of Arizona and the ranches of Texas have given him a peculiar right and privilege to portray it permanently in literature.

From one point of view "The Virginian," as Mr. Wister himself suggests in the preface, may be looked upon as an "historical novel," for "Wyoming, between 1874 and 1890 [the period covered by the novel], was a colony as wild as was Virginia one hundred years earlier. As wild, with a scantier population, and the same primitive joys and dangers." But, like the buffalo and antelope and roving multitudes of cattle, the horseman will never come again, — at least on the plains of Wyoming. "He rides in his historic yesterday."

And so, as the portrayal of a unique and vanishing type of American provincial life, "The Virginian" is doubly worth studying, — from the historical and from the literary point of view. Surely the literary art that has gone into the book is something fine and refreshing, — one gets that sense of freedom and largeness, of nobility and wholesomeness, of being close to mother earth and also to the star-sown sky of true

romance, which, after all, is the highest effect of great art.

The gambling Virginian, his hand holding the unaimed pistol on the card table and his soft, drawling voice saying significantly to Trampas, "When you call me that, *smile*"; the humorous Virginian, sharing his bed with the patronizing drummer; the sympathetic Virginian, tenderly helping little "Em'ly," the spinster hen, in her ludicrous attempts at motherhood, after puppies and potatoes had failed; the strong and chivalric Virginian, lifting the pale little school-teacher out of the half-submerged stage and carrying her off through the flood; and the same somewhat jealous Virginian, joining with Lin McLean in exchanging babies, — the versatility and humor of this portraiture are indeed original and engaging.

The Virginian as an indomitable lover, with his "You're goin' to love me before we get through"; his sublimely humorous frog story, with its significant close, — "Frawgs are dead, Trampas, and so are you"; his spiritual, long-continued vigils with the orthodox and full-fed preacher, Dr. MacBride; the wounded, almost dying man, with his head resting against Molly Wood as she washed away the blood, near the spring; his pitiful attempts to ride the five miles to safety and her heroic efforts to help him on the way; her brave and admirable nursing; his characteristic comment on the close of Browning's poem that she read to him; his pathetic confession to her that he was not fitted to make her happy,—"This is no country for a lady"; and the two, with the brilliant folds of the Navajo blanket about them, and Grandmother Stark's picture looking down upon them in a faint sort of approval, — such phases of the story have in them a human and dramatic touch that marks real literature.

But nowhere in the book does the weirdly dramatic reach such an intensity as in the night preceding the hanging of the horse-thieves to the cottonwoods ; and nowhere does the almost hopelessly tragic reach such a precipice of breathless interest as when, at sunset, the Virginian overrules the appealing terror of his sweetheart, and walks cautiously out to shoot and be shot at. The dead Trampas, with all his malevolence and murderous cunning while alive, clears the horizon for that wonderful honeymoon on the island and up among the mountain pines, and for that rather humorous visit back in Bennington among the conventional relatives.

At times it seems as if Molly Wood were hardly worth the Virginian's while, but in the final test she is seen to be the true descendant of old Grandmother Stark, — a woman of heart and soul, of nerve and will, that came into a full appreciation of the Virginian's unusual and genuinely noble and lovable qualities, which proved to be in such combination as to win and hold her love.

In Hamlin Garland, also, the Far West has found a fortunate interpreter ; and in the " Eagle's Heart," " Her Mountain Lover," and most of all in the " Captain of the Gray Horse Troop," there is felt a full familiarity with its life, a strong power of characterization, and, in the last-mentioned volume, a remarkable sympathy with the Indian mind in its highest and truest outworkings. The same fine sympathy with the Indian character is seen in Helen Hunt Jackson's " Ramona," — that beautiful romance of Southern California life, — even if the author has attempted to read into her Indian types many of the emotions and aspirations of her own poetic and philanthropic nature.

In such unique short stories as the " Pearls of Loreto," the " Bells of San Gabriel," and " When the Devil was

Well," — found in the collection entitled "Before the Gringo Came," — Mrs. Gertrude Atherton has made striking studies in fiction of the earlier mixed Spanish and American life in California; and being herself a native of San Francisco, with a commingling of blood from Louisiana and New England, and having deliberately lived some of her later life in old towns and hamlets where some of the older Spanish customs and types survive, she seems peculiarly fitted by experience and natural endowment to picture with sympathy and an approach to truthfulness the traits and types that differentiate dwellers on the Southern Pacific slope from Americans of other sections of the country. There is much of the spirit of romance in her work, as is illustrated in "The Californians"; but it grows easily out of the social conditions and the natural environment which Mrs. Atherton so fully comprehends and feels. Mr. Ambrose Bierce has also touched phases of California character and scenery in his book of weird short stories called "Can Such Things Be?"

But for a certain side of earlier and more picturesque California life, — the crude, primitive, daring life of the miner and the gambler, the fallen woman and the philanthropic schoolmistress, and all the free, resolute types of a transplanted and heterogeneous civilization that characterize the frontier, the American, and especially the English, reader will instinctively turn to Bret Harte, whose best work was done while he was still a resident of California himself. For removal to the East, under the stress of great popularity, and later to England for the rest of his life, seems not to have given him much new literary material, but rather to have sent his imagination and affection back to the once virgin fields of the great Pacific slope, where lived (and still live, thanks to their creator) the improvised midwife

Stumpy, the heroic Kentuck that dying took "The Luck" with him, and the wilful but loyal M'liss; the imperturbable, smooth-handed Oakhurst, "who struck a streak of bad luck" and "handed in his checks" on a certain December day of 1850; the tactful Miggles and her collapsing charge; Yuba Bill, the reminiscent and facetious stage-driver; and "Tennessee's Partner," who vainly argued for Tennessee with a full bag of gold. And where shall we find a more dramatic ride than that of Dick Bullen and the swift-footed Jovita, dashing through the night over Rattlesnake Hill in quest of Christmas toys for poor little Johnny, who had "a fevier, and childblains and roomatiz"? Such a theme, with all its movement and human quality, might fitly have been celebrated by the author of "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix." The broken-armed Dick, arriving at Simpson's Bar at dawn and fainting on the threshold, with the remark that "Sandy Claus has come," is a picture of pioneer sentiment and pathos that only Bret Harte knows how to paint with poetic touch.

It was as far back as 1868, when Mr. Harte became, with Noah Brooks, the editor of the *Overland Monthly* in San Francisco, that "The Luck of Roaring Camp" made its appearance in the second number of the magazine; and the first issue of the monthly in 1869 contained another short story that suddenly showed the literary world a genius of a new order, — it was the thrilling short drama of "The Outcasts of Poker Flat." "M'liss," "Miggles," "Tennessee's Partner," and "How Santa Claus Came to Simpson's Bar," with the two short stories just mentioned, make up a collection as unique and dramatic as anything in American literature. And with all that seems melodramatic in their make-up and with all their peculiar insistence on certain

traits that might not be celebrated in the most "respectable" literature, these short stories have a vital quality, a subtlety of humorous sense, and a power of swift characterization that make them a fresh delight to each new circle of readers. They have, too, a sensitive poetical feeling for the grandeur and beauty of the California mountains, for the brilliant depths of the California sky, and the impressiveness of the great woods that constitute a unique setting for the strange, picturesque types Mr. Harte has drawn with so light and yet so strong a hand. Some of these provincial characters are as truly rescued from oblivion by the art of Bret Harte as the Creole types have been by Mr. Cable, the Tennessee mountain types by Miss Murfree, or the Hoosier types by Edward Eggleston. Although in his longer-sustained effort of "Gabriel Conroy," Mr. Harte seems not to be at his best, in his other short stories, like "Found at Blazing Star" and "A Ship of '49," included in the collection entitled "Frontier Stories," and "The Rose of Tuolomne" and "An Heiress of Red Dog," included in "Tales of the Argonauts," one feels the same sense of easy power in dialogue and characterization, the same spontaneous and satirical humor, and the same sympathy with the crude, picturesque life of early California, that was felt in his first famous book of stories.

So brief a survey of the field of fiction that portrays the varied phases of provincial life in America can in the nature of things be only suggestive, — no pretense is made that it is comprehensive or exhaustive; but enough has been glanced at in the groupings of this volume to show how attractive is the field, and how much richness of enjoyment lies in the reading and study of American literature from this point of view.

CHAPTER XVI

"THE VIRGINIAN" BY OWEN WISTER

A CLOSE scrutiny of heroes in fiction is likely to reveal the fact that very few of them are actually men, and the highest praise bestowed on "Tom Jones" is said to be that of a great critical authority who remarked of the novel, "This is not a book, but a man." It would not, perhaps, be far from a fair critical estimate to say of "The Virginian" that this is a man; a Virginian, to be sure, with his soft, drawling tones and his chivalrous attitude toward the weak, — but a man also, in the larger sense, who gathers up into his hard and dramatic life the virile elements of the great West. This is a real man, who would have been different in his physical and mental and moral make-up if he had lived under a less rugged and exacting environment than the high plains of Wyoming in the period between 1874 and 1890. As a cow-puncher, — a horseman with his "pasturing thousands," he is a vanishing type, broadly and lastingly portrayed. And it is a matter of good fortune that one so conversant with the type and its environment should have had the privilege of giving them a permanent place in American literature; for, as Mr. Wister himself says of his plainsman in his suggestive introduction "To the Reader," "You will no more see him gallop out of the unchanging silence than you will see Columbus on the unchanging sea come sailing from Palos with his caravels."

The first view that the narrator of "The Virginian" got of his prospective hero was through a Pullman car window at Medicine Bow, where the roping of some cow ponies in a corral near the water-tank of the railroad was going on rather unsuccessfully. One pony in particular defied and evaded the most skillful of the cowboys, whose humorous curses could be heard even through the glass of the car windows. No stratagem or skill in hurling the rope seemed able to catch the agile and swift-eyed pony. Suddenly a man sitting on the high gate of the corral, looking on, climbed down "with the undulations of a tiger, smooth and easy, as if his muscles flowed beneath his skin." The others had visibly hurled the rope, some even shoulder high; but this man's arm seemed neither to lift nor move. He apparently held the rope low down, by his leg; then "like a sudden snake," the noose shot out its full length and fell true; and the thing was done. "As the captured pony walked in with a sweet, church-door expression, our train moved slowly on to the station, and a passenger approvingly remarked, 'That man knows his business.'"

A lost trunk had so disconcerted Judge Henry's guest, — who tells the story, — that he was oblivious of the shining antelope among the sage-brush and the great sunset light of Wyoming, when his attention was diverted by a dialogue between a man with a gentle, drawling Southern voice, and another who was addressed as "Uncle Hughey." The narrator stepped to the door of the baggage-room and noted the man with the Southern drawl. It was "The Virginian." "Lounging there at ease against the wall was a slim young giant, more beautiful than pictures." His soft, broad hat, pushed back, a loose-knotted, dull-scarlet handkerchief sagging from his throat, one thumb hooked

into his slanting cartridge-belt, and boots and overalls white with dust that indicated long travel through the country, — these were evident at a glance. "The weather-beaten bloom of his face shone through it [the dust] duskily, as the ripe peaches look upon their trees in a dry season. But no dinginess of travel or shabbiness of attire could tarnish the splendor that radiated from his youth and strength."

Judge Henry's guest suggested to the Virginian that his valise would be sufficient for a day or two, — when the lost trunk might be sent for, — and that they might start for the Judge's home at once if it didn't bring them there too late. It was then sunset. Whereat the Virginian coolly remarked: "It's two hundred and sixty-three miles." So that a night in Medicine Bow on the top of a counter was the only alternative for the Judge's guest. And such a night the "tenderfoot" had never seen! For it was on that night in a saloon that the tenderfoot learned what manner of man the soft-spoken Virginian was.

Five or six players sat in a corner at a round table where counters were piled, among them the Virginian and Trampas, the dealer of the cards. Such expressions as "Why didn't you stay in Arizona?" and "Well, Arizona's no place for amatures," stirred something of a sensation in the room, for they were evidently directed at the Virginian, who the year before had paid a visit to Arizona. The ugliness in the voice of Trampas, the dealer, was due to the fact that he was losing to the Virginian, who was a stranger to him. When it came the Virginian's turn to bet, or leave the game, he deliberated a moment or two, — long enough for the insulting Trampas to say, "Your bet, you son-of-a ——." Suddenly the Virginian's pistol came out, and holding it in

his hand, unaimed, on the table, and speaking in his characteristically soft drawl, — though a little longer drawn than usual — he gave his orders to Trampas, "When you call me that, *smile*." "Yes, the voice was gentle. But in my ears it seemed as if somewhere the bell of death was ringing; and silence, like a stroke, fell on the large room." Some were crouching, and some shifting their positions, while the narrator, in his ignorance of what it all meant, stood stock-still. It meant to Trampas either "the choice to back down or draw his steel." And he didn't draw his steel. There were no more contemptuous remarks on the part of Trampas about "amatures," for in the person of the black-haired, soft-voiced Virginian was a proved expert in the art of self-preservation.

The admiration of one of the card-dealers for the Virginian's superb quickness and coolness was thus expressed to a player who had evidently been very nervous over the situation: "You got ready to dodge. You had no call to be concerned. . . . It's not a brave man that's dangerous. It's the cowards that scare me." Having illustrated his last remark by a recent shooting incident in the saloon, the dealer continued: "And that's why I never like to be around where there's a coward. You can't tell. He'll always go to shooting before it's necessary, and there's no security who he'll hit. But a man like that black-headed guy is" (the dealer indicated the Virginian) "need never worry you. And there's another point why there's no need to worry about him: *it'll be too late!*"

That night Judge Henry's guest learned more of the Virginian's resourcefulness and humor; and on their long and adventurous ride together across the country the Virginian's personal dignity and strong self-respect, his droll wit and

shrewd penetration, his courage and splendid "nerve," and his love and mastery of horses, were all abundantly illustrated. Near the end of their journey together they were met by a friend of the Virginian's — Mr. Taylor by name — who gave the news that Bear Creek was to have a schoolhouse and a "schoolmarm." Mr. Taylor handed the Judge's guest a letter from a possible candidate in the East, — Miss Mary Stark Wood of Bennington, Vermont, — and wanted to know how it "sized up" with the letters "they write back East." The signature was of especial significance to the Virginian, — it read, "Your very sincere spinster"; whereat Mr. Taylor guessed she was forty, but the Virginian, twenty. "Her handwriting ain't like any I've saw," commented Mr. Taylor. "But Bear Creek would not object to that, provided she knows 'rithmetic and George Washington and them kind of things." The Virginian's comment, as he sat looking at the letter, was somewhat penetrating: "I expect she is not an awful sincere spinster. . . . Your real spinster don't speak of her lot that easy."

Mr. Wister's talent for humorous narrative of an unusual sort is seen at its best in the chapter called "Em'ly," which describes the forlorn and ridiculous attempts of an "old-maid" hen to be a mother, — her attempts including repeated "settings" on potatoes, onions, soap, green peaches, and oval stones, and her adoptions embracing bantams, young turkeys, and setter puppies! The Virginian's joyous sense of humor, his tender sympathy, and his quick power of drawing human analogies are made an inseparable part of this unique chapter, in which the Virginian and the Judge's guest are drawn so intimately together.

Four days of train and thirty hours of stage had brought

Miss Mary Stark Wood to the crossing of a river on the Western plains. She had refused to marry, back in Bennington, Vermont, the young man of "prospects" whom she liked but did not love. This refusal was against her mother's wishes, but was supported by the stout spirit of her great-aunt over at Dunbarton, who believed in marrying for love. And thus Molly Wood, with something of the spirit of her great colonial ancestress, Molly Stark, was trying to be independent and self-supporting, and had pledged herself to become the first teacher in the new Bear Creek schoolhouse in far-off Wyoming.

It was at sunrise, that, eternally lurching along across the alkali, the stage reached the edge of a river. The driver had had on the box with him, as a companion, only a bottle, which had proved too strong for him. As the stage descended into the river for fording, it lurched over to one side, two wheels sank down over an edge, and the seat on which Miss Molly Wood sat careened so threateningly that the young woman put her head out of the stage door and tremulously asked if anything was wrong. But the driver was too much absorbed with profanity and the lash to notice her. However, a tall rider came close against the buried axles, and took the young woman out of the stage upon his horse so suddenly that she screamed. There were splashes, she saw a rolling flood, and then she was lifted down upon the bank. The rider gave a word of encouragement, insisted on the stage-driver's throwing away his bottle, and, swinging into his saddle, was off before the rescued woman could frame her belated thanks. Her rescuer was the Virginian; and later in the season he came alone to the same crossing of the river, which now was a bed of dry sand, with here and there a pool. Regarding the extremely safe channel,

where the rushing river formerly had been, he meditatively said: "She cert'nly wouldn't need to grip me so close this mawnin'. I reckon it will mightily astonish her when I tell her how harmless the torrent is lookin'." Passing a slice of bread covered with sardines to his pony he continued: "You're a plumb pie-biter, you Monte." Monte rubbed his nose on his master's shoulder. "I wouldn't trust you with berries and cream. No, seh; not though yu' did rescue a drownin' lady."

The dance at the barbecue, given by the Swinton Brothers at their Goose Egg ranch on Bear Creek, was particularly notable for the way in which Miss Molly Wood refused to waltz with the Virginian without an introduction, although she knew him perfectly well as the man who had rescued her from her plight in the stage. But the Virginian, not to be so easily defeated, begged her pardon, and, bringing up a common friend, asked to be presented in due form. It was while she was dancing with some of the married men that the Virginian, with his characteristic love of a practical joke, exchanged the offspring of these same men, and did it so skillfully that the fathers and mothers reached home without recognizing the exchange and the joke. His finesse in diverting responsibility and his later confession at the most opportune time are very happily portrayed by Mr. Wister.

Before the beginning of festivities that evening, while some of the cowboys, including Chalkeye, Nebrasky, Trampas, and Honey Wiggin, were stretched on the ground about the steer that was being roasted whole, some rather uncomplimentary allusions were made to the new school-teacher, Miss Molly Wood, by Trampas. Suddenly he found the Virginian standing over him in a threatening attitude;

and when ordered by the former to stand up and confess himself a liar, Trampas sullenly obeyed, under the dominating power of the Virginian's eyes. "The eye of a man is the prince of deadly weapons." Then the Virginian spoke: "Keep a-standin' still. I ain' going to trouble yu' long. In admittin' yourself to be a liar you have spoke God's truth for onced. Honey Wiggin, you and me and the boys have hit town too frequent for any of us to play Sunday on the balance of the gang." The Virginian paused to observe the effect of his action and words on "Public Opinion, seated around in carefully inexpressive attention," and then modestly continued: "We ain't a Christian outfit a little bit, and maybe we have most forgotten what decency feels like. But I reckon we haven't *plumb* forgot what it means."

An illustration of the Virginian's mental independence, which prevented the young school-teacher from playing constantly the part of patron and superior, was seen in his characteristic discussion of the idea of equality: "I'll tell you what, equality is a great big bluff. It's easy called. . . . I look around and I see folks movin' up or movin' down, winners or losers everywhere. All luck, of course. But since folks can be born that different in their luck, where's your equality? No, seh! call your failure luck, or call it laziness, wander around the words, prospect all yu' mind to, and yu'll come out the same old trail of inequality." Pausing a moment, and looking at the woman he intended to win by his love, he added: "Some holds four aces, and some holds nothin', and some poor fello' gets the aces and no show to play 'em; but a man has got to prove himself my equal before I'll believe him."

The Judge's guest — the narrator of the story — had expected, on his return visit from the East, to be riding soon

with the Virginian among "the clean hills of Sunk Creek." What was his surprise and gratification, as he walked into Colonel Cyrus Jones's eating palace in Omaha, to see sitting at a table, alone, the Virginian himself. The palace itself was a curious phase in the development of Western architecture. "It was a shell of wood, painted with golden emblems, — the steamboat, the eagle, the Yosemite, — and a live bear ate gratuities at its entrance. Weather permitting, it opened upon the world as a stage upon the audience. You sat in Omaha's whole sight and dined, while Omaha's dust came and settled upon the refreshments. It is gone the way of the Indian and the buffalo, for the West is growing old. You should have seen the palace and sat there. In front of you passed rainbows of men, — Chinese, Indian chiefs, Africans, General Miles, younger sons, Austrian nobility, wide females in pink. Our continent drained prismatically through Omaha once."

As the narrator was passing, there came floating out from "the palace" the language of Colonel Cyrus Jones. He stood at the rear of his palace in gray flowery mustaches and a Confederate uniform, and announced the wishes of the guests to the cook through a hole. After the Virginian's characteristically undemonstrative welcome of the Judge's guest, who had entered the restaurant to be "fanned" by the breezy vocabulary of the Colonel, the cow-puncher observed, as he looked about on the other guests with critical attention, that "Them that comes hyeh don't eat. They feed. . . . D' yu' reckon they find joyful di-gestion in this swallo'-an'-get-out trough?" To his friend's inquiry as to what he was in such a place for, he philosophically remarked: "Oh, pshaw! When yu' can't have what you choose, yu' just choose what you have." And he took the bill of fare.

The Virginian noticed on the elaborately French menu a special item, *Frogs' legs à la Delmonico;* and he asked his friend rather incredulously if they were "true anywheres." And on its being explained that Delmonico in New York and Augustin in Philadelphia actually made a specialty of frogs' legs, the Virginian said, with an engaging smile, "There's not a little bit o' use in lyin' to me this mawnin'. I ain't goin' to awdeh anything's laigs." The Judge's guest, however, was in an experimental mood; and, curious to see how Colonel Cyrus Jones would handle the unwonted order, he asked for frogs' legs. "'Wants frogs' legs, does he?' shouted Colonel Cyrus Jones. He fixed his eye upon me, and it narrowed to a slit. 'Too many brain workers breakfasting before yu' came in, professor,' said he. 'Missionary ate the last leg off me just now. Brown the wheat!' he commanded, through the hole to the cook, for some one had ordered hot cakes.

"'I'll have fried aiggs,' said the Virginian. 'Cooked both sides.'

"'White wings!' sang the Colonel through the hole. 'Let 'em fly up and down.'

"'Coffee an' no milk,' said the Virginian.

"'Draw one in the dark!' the Colonel roared.

"'And beefsteak, rare.'

"'One slaughter in the pan, and let the blood drip!'

"'I should like a glass of water, please,' said I. The Colonel threw me a look of pity. 'One Missouri and ice for the professor!' he said." The process of ordering was ended, and the Virginian's only comment was, as he looked at the Colonel, "That fellow's a right live man." The "Colonel" proved to be Scipio le Moyne, who later served the Virginian in a crisis as the expert broiler of frogs. Dur-

ing breakfast the Virginian's curiosity concerning Delmonico and frogs' legs returned, and his companion was able to give him a good deal of information about the career of Lorenzo Delmonico, which the Virginian later put to such brilliant use in his competing frog story. "Mighty inter-estin'," he said—"mighty. He could just take little old o'rn'ry frawgs, and dandy 'em up to suit the bloods. Mighty inter-estin'. I expaict, though, his cookin' would give an outraiged stomach to a plain-raised man."

Despite the modesty of the Virginian, it developed that he had been promoted by Judge Henry, his employer, to be deputy foreman, and was on his way to Chicago with twenty carloads of steers and half a dozen cowboys. And one of his chief responsibilities lay in the necessity of getting these cowboys safely back to the Judge's ranch in Wyoming, past all the temptations of cities, and in spite of the malevolent maneuvers of Trampas, his irreconcilable enemy. The cowboys beside the railway track in Omaha were indulging in a game of poker, while the Virginian, sitting with his friend on the top of a car, was contemplating the sandy shallows of the Platte. When asked by his friend why he didn't take a hand in the game, the Virginian contemptuously replied, "Poker? With them kittens?" He suddenly took out of his pocket a copy of "Kenilworth" that Miss Molly Wood had let him have, and turning the volume over slowly in his hand without opening it, he remarked reflectively, "Queen Elizabeth would have played a mighty pow'ful game." "Poker?" said his friend. "Yes, seh. Do you expaict Europe has got any queen equal to her at present?" When doubt was expressed, the Virginian gave one of his historical judgments in characteristic form. "Victoria 'd get pretty nigh slain sliding chips out agaynst Elizabeth. Only, mos' prob'ly

Victoria she'd insist on a half-cent limit. You have read this hyeh 'Kenilworth'? Well, deal Elizabeth ace high, an' she could scare Robert Dudley, with a full house, plumb out o' the bettin'." On the unquestioning assent of his companion, the Virginian continued, "And if Essex's play got next her too near, I reckon she'd have stacked the cyards. Say, d'yu' remember Shakespeare's fat man?"

An answer in the affirmative led the Virginian to give his candid judgment on Shakespeare and his literary work, and to express his regret that the great dramatist was ignorant of the possibilities of poker. "Ain't that grand? Why, he makes men talk the way they do in life. I reckon he couldn't get printed to-day. It's a right down shame Shakespeare couldn't know about poker. He'd have had Falstaff playing all day at that Tearsheet outfit. And the Prince would have beat him." The Virginian felt sure, too, that Falstaff would have had enough brains to play whist. "You can play whist with your brains — brains and cyards. Now, cyards are only one o' the manifestations of poker in this hyeh world. One o' the shapes yu' fool with it in when the day's work is oveh. If a man is built like that Prince boy was built (and it's away down deep beyond brains), he'll play winnin' poker with whatever hand he's holdin' when the trouble begins. Maybe it will be a mean, triflin' army, or an empty six-shooter, or a lame hawss, or maybe just nothin' but his natural countenance. 'Most any old thing will do for a fello' like that Prince boy to play poker with."

Leaving the Virginian with his uncertain cowboys and his two trains of steers bound for Chicago, Judge Henry's prospective guest, on his autumn holiday, was making his way through the Black Hills in a saddle; but on account of the steady downpour he was only too glad to change to a seat

in the stage. As he climbed in over the wheel somebody on the inside considerately inquired, "Six legs inside this jerky to-night?" The asker of the question was none other than "Colonel" Cyrus Jones, formerly of the eating palace in Omaha, whose conversational power was wholly undiminished. He gave an early introduction of himself: "Scipio le Moyne, from Gallipolice, Ohio. The eldest of us always gets called Scipio. It's French. But us folks have been white for a hundred years." Scipio was limber and light-muscled, and skillfully avoided bruises as the "jerky" swayed or plunged. "He had a strange, long, jocular nose, very wary-looking, and a bleached blue eye." "Shorty," the third occupant of the stage, was what his name implied, and the joltings of the jerky seemed to hurt him almost every time. "He was light-haired and mild. Think of a yellow dog that is lost, and fancies each newcomer in sight is going to turn out his master, and you will have Shorty."

The intimacy of the three travelers was suddenly deepened by their unavailing efforts to catch the Northern Pacific train at Medora. It had changed its schedule time. Scipio and Shorty shot from the jerky in advance of the Judge's guest, who was encumbered by a valise. They dashed through sand and "knee-high grease wood" in their race for the train, a piece of stray wire springing up and clutching the carrier of the valise, and tin cans spinning from under his feet. The loss of the train meant to them a loss of twenty-four hours; but despite their desperate racing and shouting and waving of hats they were all left behind. Scipio, as he saw the train insultingly move off, dropped philosophically into a walk; but the other two, overtaking him, ran madly forward to the empty track.

The carrier of the valise kicked it and then sat on it,

speechless with wrath; Shorty gave way to uncontrollable lament, detailing all his woes to the unsympathetic air; but Scipio, the superior, narrowed his bleached blue eyes to slits, as he watched the rear car fading to westward, and addressed the vanishing train: "Think you've got me left, do yu'? Just because yu' ride through this country on a rail, do yu' claim yu' can find your way around? I could take yu' out ten yards in the brush and lose yu' in ten seconds, you spangle-roofed hobo! Leave *me* behind! you recent blanket-mortgage yearlin'! You plush-lined, nickel-plated, whistlin' wash room, d'yu' figure I can't go East just as soon as West? Or I'll stay right here if it suits me, yu' dude-inhabited hot-box!" Scipio's epithets increased in volume and emphasis till they became unprintable, and then he gradually descended from his climax to express sympathy with the train for not having a mother.

To the immense surprise and pleasure of Judge Henry's guest a slow, drawling Southern voice, the voice of the Virginian, suddenly expressed his sorrow over his friend's loss of breath in pursuit of the train, and inquired if the valise was suffering any. There sat the Virginian, with a newspaper, on the rear platform of a caboose attached to a freight train westward bound. His cowboys were inside, and he himself carried the air of a man for whom things were "going smooth." He had evidently delivered his steers in Chicago and was returning to Sunk Creek ranch. He turned to Scipio with the remark that "these hyeh steam cyars make a man's language mighty nigh as speedy as his travel." "So yu' heard me speakin' to the express," said Scipio. "Well, I guess, sometimes I — See here," he exclaimed, under the grave scrutiny of the Virginian, "I may have talked some, but I walked a whole lot. You didn't

catch *me* squandering no speed." The Virginian remarked that he had noticed that in Scipio's case thinking came quicker than running; whereupon Scipio observed: "Oh, I could tell yu'd been enjoyin' us! Observin' somebody else's scrape always kind o' rests me too. Maybe you're a philosopher, but maybe there's a pair of us drawd in this deal."

From Scipio's legs the Virginian judged that the former was used to the saddle, but from his hands he inferred that he had not been roping steers very recently. And he suddenly asked, "Been cookin' or something?" To which the spirited Scipio retorted: "Say, tell my future some now. Draw a conclusion from my mouth." "I'm right distressed," returned the Southerner, "we've not a drop in the outfit." "Oh, drink with me uptown!" cried the hospitable Scipio, — "I'm pleased to death with yu'." Glancing where the saloons stood behind the station, the Virginian shook his head; and Scipio plaintively insisted: "Why, it ain't a bit far to whisky from here! Step down, now. Scipio le Moyne's my name. Yes, you're lookin' for my brass ear-rings. But there ain't no ear-rings on me. I've been white for a hundred years. Step down. I've a forty-dollar thirst." The Virginian's only response was the beginning of a remark about Scipio's "being white," when from the inside of the caboose came the howled-out chorus of a cowboy song, and the train began to move off. Suddenly the Virginian stood up and offered to this new-found acquaintance a forty-dollar job if he would save "that thirst." "Why, you're talkin' business!" cried Scipio, and leaped aboard.

As the Virginian and Scipio le Moyne continued in dialogue, one of the group on the inside came out on the platform of the caboose, slamming the door behind him.

"H——l!" cried the man, at sight of the distant town. "I told you," addressing the Virginian threateningly, "I told you I was going to get a bottle here." "Have your bottle, then," said the deputy foreman, and kicked him off into Dakota. The Virginian's pistol followed the direction of his boot; so that the man sat quietly in Dakota, watching the train moving on into Montana, and making no objection. At a safe distance, he rose and made his way toward the region of the saloons. It was the cook that had thus suddenly parted company with the Virginian's "outfit," and the Virginian could not forego expressing his disgust as he holstered his pistol. "This is the only step I have had to take this whole trip;" and then he added regretfully, "So nyeh back home!"

Scipio's interest in his new-found employer was so much intensified by this incident that he asked Judge Henry's guest if he had known the Virginian long. Being answered "Fairly," Scipio looked with admiration at the Virginian's back, and spoke judicially, "Well, start awful early when yu' go to fool with him, or he'll make you feel onpunctual." The Southerner, tilting his head toward the noise in the caboose, again expressed his regret that, after having the cow-punchers under his control for almost three thousand miles, he should now have been compelled to part with one of them. "I had the boys plumb contented. Away along as far as Saynt Paul I had them reconciled to my authority. Then this news about gold had to strike us." "And they're a-dreamin' nuggets and Parisian bowleyvards," sympathetically suggested Scipio. The Virginian smiled his gratitude, and, regaining his usual relish of things, continued in the line of Scipio's suggestion, "Fortune is shinin' bright and blindin' to their delicate young eyes."

The Virginian asserted his belief that all his cowboys would return with him to Sunk Creek, "accordin' to the Judge's awdehs." "Never a calf of them will desert to Rawhide, for all their dangerousness. . . . Only one is left now that don't sing." Turning to Scipio le Moyne, he remarked that the man he had parted with was the cook, "and I will ask yu' to replace him, Colonel." At the word "colonel" Scipio opened his mouth in astonishment. "Colonel! Say!" He stared at the Virginian and asked him if he had met him at "the palace" in Omaha. "Not exackly met," replied the Southerner. "I was praisent one mawnin' las' month when this gentleman awdehed frawgs' laigs."

Hereupon the surprised but versatile Scipio, alias the "Colonel," explained at length his difficult position in Omaha. "Sakes and saints, but that was a mean position! . . . I had to tell all comers anything all day. Stand up and jump language hot off my brain at 'em. And the pay don't near compensate for the drain on the system. I don't care how good a man is, you let him keep a-tappin' his presence of mind right along, without taking a lay-off, and you'll have him sick. Yes, sir. You'll hit his nerves. So I told them they could hire some fresh man, for I was goin' back to punch cattle or fight Indians, or take a rest somehow, for I didn't propose to get jaded, and me only twenty-five years old."

Scipio confessed that the regular Colonel Cyrus Jones had long ago departed this life, but because of "the palace's" large business the management continued a live bear on the outside and a pretended "Colonel" within. "And it's a turruble mean position. Course I'll cook for yu'. Yu've a dandy memory for faces." "I wasn't quite convinced till

I kicked him off, and you gave that shut to your eyes again," explained the Virginian.

The appearance at the door of the caboose of Trampas, the Virginian's scheming enemy, and his inquiry for Schoffner, the cook, whom the deputy foreman had kicked from the platform, called out the reply of the Southerner, "I expaict he'll have got his bottle by now, Trampas." Trampas, looking from one to another on the platform, asked curiously, "Didn't he say he was coming back?" "He reminded me," said the Virginian, "he was going for a bottle, and afteh that he didn't wait to say a thing." When Trampas insisted that Schoffner had told him he was coming back, the Southerner, with his quiet and characteristic humor, replied: "I don't reckon he has come, not without he clumb up ahaid somewhere. An' I mus' say, when he got off he didn't look like a man does when he has the intention o' returnin'." And after another unsatisfactory question Trampas abruptly returned to the inside of the caboose.

"Is he the member who don't sing?" asked the penetrating Scipio. "That's the specimen," answered the Southerner. "He don't seem musical in the face," said Scipio. "Pshaw!" returned the Virginian. "Why, you surely ain't the man to mind ugly mugs — when they're hollow!" After the Virginian himself had retreated into the caboose, Scipio inquired of Judge Henry's guest his opinion as to whether the Virginian would succeed in getting his cowboys back to Sunk Creek. To the answer that the Southerner had said he would, and that he was a man with the "courage of his convictions," Scipio skeptically exclaimed: "That ain't near courage enough to have! There's times in life when a man has got to have courage *without* convictions — *without* them

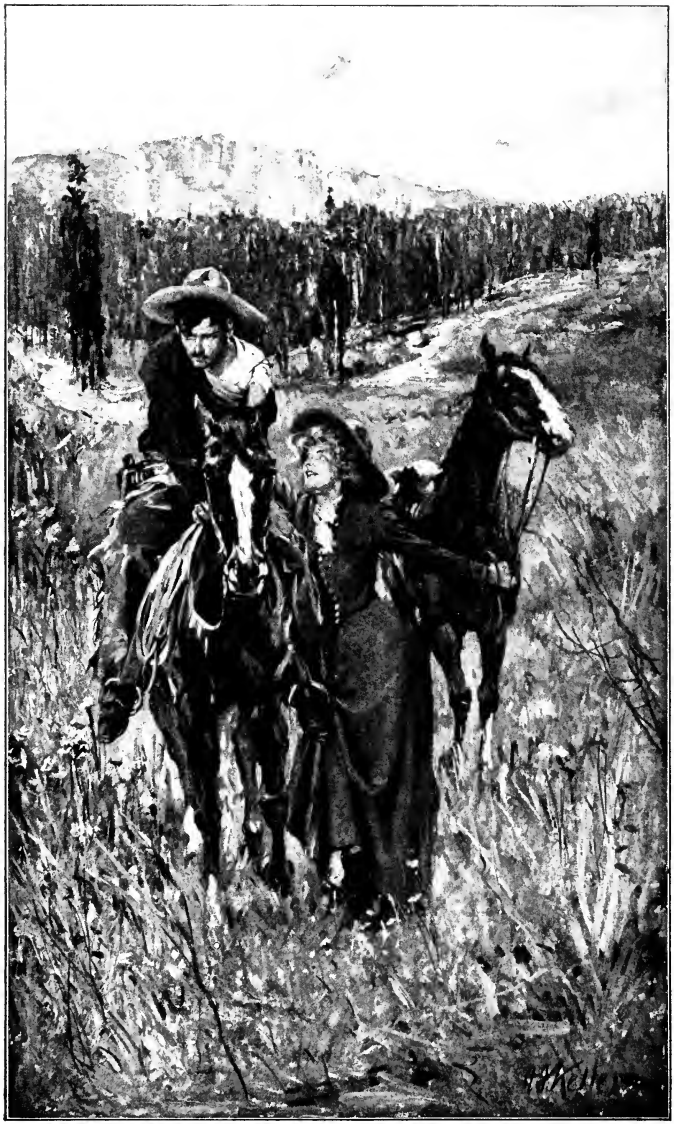
— or he is no good. Now your friend is that deep constitooted that you don't know and I don't know what he's thinkin' about all this." Scipio le Moyne, as a type of the breezy, slangy, widely experienced Westerner, who is shrewdly observant, swift in his judgments of human nature and human motive, and humorously versatile in emergencies, is one of the best-drawn and most interesting figures in the book; and we are not surprised that the Virginian relishes the originality and imaginative sympathy of the man.

The Virginian's quiet mastery of men as illustrated in his getting his cowboys back from Chicago despite the temptations of cities, the appeal made to their greediness by the rumors of gold at Rawhide, and the malevolent influence of Trampas, — the Virginian's implacable enemy, — recalls the elaborate and sublimely humorous "frawg" story, which the Virginian found it necessary to tell to beat Trampas and his partisans at their own malicious game of ridicule. That story meant all the difference between success and failure for the Virginian in his important trip to the East as deputy foreman for Judge Henry, and it was effective enough to accomplish its purpose of keeping the men together till they reached Sunk Creek.

In discussing theology and parsons with Judge Henry's guest, the Virginian had certain original and unhackneyed points of view that showed the earnest and rational side of the man. He had inquired as to the number of religions in the world, and being told there were at least fifteen that were supposed to have the same God as an object of worship, the Virginian rather skeptically exclaimed: "One God and fifteen religions. That's a right smart of religions for just one God." The laugh on the narrator's part at this comment led the Virginian to remark in addition: "Do you

think they ought to be fifteen varieties of good people? . . . There ain't fifteen. There ain't two. There's one kind. And when I meet it I respect it. It is not praying nor preaching that has ever caught me and made me ashamed of myself, but one or two people I have knowed that never said a superior word to me. They thought more o' me than I deserved, and that made me behave better than I naturally wanted to. . . . And if ever I was to have a son or somebody I set store by, I would wish their lot to be to know one or two good folks mighty well — men or women — women preferred." "As for parsons," he continued with a somewhat deprecating gesture, "I reckon some parsons have a right to tell yu' to be good. The bishop of this hyeh Territory has a right. But I'll tell yu' this: a middlin' doctor is a pore thing, and a middlin' lawyer is a pore thing; but keep me from a middlin' man of God." Such a "middlin' man of God" the Virginian found in Dr. MacBride, the missionary to the cowboys, whom he wickedly persuaded to spend most of the night in prayer and spiritual counsel for the Virginian's sin-stricken soul.

His promotion to be foreman of Judge Henry's ranch for a long time prevented the Virginian from riding over to Bear Creek to see Miss Molly Wood, the school-teacher; and finally, at the end of the winter, he was driven to write her a letter which illustrated, beside his devotion to her, his improvement in spelling and penmanship, to which he had given himself in his leisure time during the winter. After speaking of the early spring, he mentions the fact that "where the sun gets a chance to hit the earth strong all day it is green and has flowers too, a good many. You can see them bob and mix together in the wind." He also tells



" By his side the girl walking and cheering him forward."

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his sweetheart what he has been reading, and his literary judgments are sincere and original if not conventional: "I have read that play 'Othello.' No man should write down such a thing. Do you know if it is true? I have seen one worse affair down in Arizona. He killed his little child as well as his wife but such things should not be put down in fine language for the public. I have read Romeo and Juliet. That is beautiful language but Romeo is no man. I like his friend Mercutio that gets killed. He is a man. If he had got Juliet there would have been no foolishness and trouble."

One part of the letter in particular brought the color into the teacher's face and made her indignantly exclaim, "The outrageous wretch!" It was the part about Emily, the hen: "Did I ever tell you about a hen Emily we had here? She was venturesome to an extent I have not seen in other hens only she had poor judgment and would make no family ties. She would keep trying to get interest in the ties of others taking charge of little chicks and bantams and turkeys and puppies one time, and she thought most anything was an egg. I will tell you about her sometime. She died without family ties one day while I was building a house for her to teach school in." It was an allegory, conscious or unconscious, which the little school-teacher was swift to interpret.

The wounded Virginian, lying beside the spring, and the heroic little descendant of Molly Stark, washing away the blood, tearing bandages, and loading his revolver, make two figures of surpassingly dramatic interest. And even of greater interest are they as he leans helplessly on his horse while she supports and encourages him till they reach her own home and she can help the delirious man to lie down on

her own bed. And then such persistent nursing, such tactful attention, such diversions in the way of quiet games at cribbage and of reading aloud to the convalescent! Among the delightful things in the book is the unique comment of the Virginian on Shakespeare and Browning. He had apologized for going to sleep over one of Jane Austen's novels which she had read to him; he said by way of excuse that he thought he could keep awake if she read him "something that was *about* something," like "Henry the Fourth" for instance. "The British king is fighting, and there is his son the prince. He cert'nly must have been a jim-dandy boy if that is all true. Only he would go around town with a mighty triflin' gang. They sported and they held up citizens. And his father hated his traveling with trash like them. It was right natural — the boy and the old man! But the boy showed himself a man too. He killed a big fighter on the other side who was another jim-dandy — and he was sorry for having it to do." The Virginian grew enthusiastic in his recital of Prince Hal's adventures, and continued: "I understand most all of that. There was a fat man kept everybody laughing. He was awful natural too; except yu' don't commonly meet 'em so fat. But the prince — that play is bed-rock, ma'am!" Browning's "How They Carried the Good News from Ghent to Aix" he pronounced good — and short; while an "Incident of the French Camp" he thought was even better, only "the last part drops." The closing stanza, which relates how the wounded boy, having given his message of victory, tells Napoleon that he is not only wounded but wounded unto death, fails to meet the approval of the Virginian. "'Nay, I'm killed, sire,'" drawled the Virginian critically. "Now a man who was man enough to act like he did, yu' see, would fall dead without mentioning it."

From the dream and joy of an accepted lover to the catching and hanging of cattle-thieves (among them his once intimate friend, Steve) was a swift and painful transition for the Virginian; and one of the intensest and most dramatically written chapters in the book is that entitled "The Cottonwoods," in which his old friend Steve and another cattle-thief are portrayed in the terrible moments preceding death. In contrasting the manner of death of the two men, the Virginian had only admiration for his old friend Steve. "Well, he took dying as naturally as he took living. Like a man should. Like I hope to. . . . No play-acting nor last words. He just told good-by to the boys as we led his horse under the limb." In the Virginian's view failure to die bravely was a sort of "treason to the brotherhood," and forfeited pity. "It was Steve's perfect bearing that had caught his heart so that he forgot even his scorn of the other man."

In expressing his sympathy for the weak-willed, shallow, amiable, and easily manipulated Shorty, who fell under the malign and finally fatal influence of Trampas, the Virginian differentiated the conditions of the West and the East in a striking and discriminating way: "Now back East you can be middling and get along. But if you go to try a thing on in this Western country, you've got to do it *well.* You've got to deal cyards *well;* you've got to steal *well;* and if you claim to be quick with your gun you must be quick, for you're a public temptation, and some man will not resist trying to prove he is the quicker. You must break all the Commandments *well* in this Western country, and Shorty should have stayed in Brooklyn, for he will be a novice his livelong days." And the Virginian's judgment and prophecy were, alas! too true; for a little later, on "Superstition

Trail," they found the dead "novice" stretched by his extinct camp-fire, "with his wistful, lost-dog face upward, and his thick yellow hair unparted as it had always been." He had been murdered from behind, and the treacherous, merciless hand of Trampas had done it. Shorty had blundered once too often. As the Virginian said, regretfully looking down on the dead body, "There was no natural harm in him, but you must do a thing well in this country."

From the edge of a tableland the Virginian and his prospective bride could see the little town where on the following day the bishop of Wyoming was to make them man and wife. "There lay the town in the splendor of Wyoming space. Around it spread the watered fields . . . making squares of green and yellow crops; and the town was but a poor rag in the midst of this quilted harvest. After the fields to the east, the tawny plain began; and with one faint furrow of river lining its undulations, it stretched beyond sight. But west of the town rose the Bow Leg Mountains, cool with still unmelted snows, and their dull blue gulfs of pine. From three cañons flowed three clear forks which began the river. Their confluence was above the town a good two miles; it looked but a few paces from up here, while each side the river straggled the margin cottonwoods, like thin borders along a garden walk. Over all this map hung silence like a harmony, tremendous yet serene." No wonder the girl from the little Vermont hills whispered to her mountain lover, "How beautiful! how I love it! But, oh, how big it is!" She leaned against him an instant, as if seeking a sort of shelter in his splendid strength; and with closed eyes she saw a little village street in Vermont, and an ivy on an old front door, and her mother picking some yellow roses from a bush!

A sudden sound made her open her eyes quickly, only to see her lover turned in his saddle and reaching for his pistol. A rider, who was a stranger to her, merely nodded to the Virginian as he passed by; but out of his eyes looked "five years of gathered hate." It was Trampas, — Trampas who, courageous with whisky and baffled hate, was to give the Virginian till sundown to get out of town. To meet this murderous Trampas and run the imminent risk of death at his hands seemed to the Virginian the only course, — and this on the eve of his wedding day, the consummation of his patient and expectant love. The bishop opposed it, and his New England sweetheart drew back in horror from it, exclaiming, "If you do this, there can be no to-morrow for you and me." But despite it all, with a courage and self-sacrifice that were sublime, he met Trampas as the sun dropped behind the mountains, — those mountains to which on the morrow he had hoped to take his bride. He was standing where no one could approach him except from the front, for he remembered the fate of Shorty, who had been shot from behind. "A wind seemed to blow his sleeve off his arm, and he replied to it, and saw Trampas pitch forward. He saw Trampas raise his arm from the ground and fall again, and lie there, this time still. A little smoke was rising from the pistol on the ground, and he looked at his own, and saw the smoke flowing upward out of it. 'I expect that's all,' he said aloud;" although, as he drew near the treacherous Trampas, he kept him covered with his weapon. The hand on the ground moved, two fingers twitched, and then ceased; it was, in truth, all over. As he stood looking down at his inveterate enemy, the Virginian remarked aloud, "I told her it would not be me."

The New England conscience of Molly Wood battled

with love and capitulated; and the next day the Virginian and his strenuously won bride camped together beneath the fragrant pines of "the island," where the mountains had long before stirred the real poetry of the Virginian's virile but imaginative nature,—an ideal honeymoon for this heroic horseman of the plains who, so typical of the rough conditions about him, had yet an untainted heart of true romance.

CHAPTER XVII

"THE LUCK OF ROARING CAMP AND OTHER STORIES" BY BRET HARTE

THE year that "The Luck of Roaring Camp" appeared, — the year 1871, — there was published in *Blackwood's Magazine* in Edinburgh, a criticism of the short stories contained in the volume; and as from the beginning Bret Harte has had a large and admiring circle of readers in Great Britain, who have regarded him as typically and uniquely American in his literary work, it is of interest to give a part of this earliest critical opinion. "This sketch ['The Luck of Roaring Camp'], slight and brief as it is, answers the highest and noblest purpose of fiction. There is more in it than in scores of three-volume novels. . . . Nothing can be more rude or less lovely than the life here portrayed — nothing can be more simply true than the narrative. Here nothing is hidden, nothing excluded, no false gloss put on; and yet the heart is touched, the mind elevated by the strange tale. There is neither condemnation nor horror of vice in it — vice being a matter of course in the community; yet its tendency is more than virtuous, it is lofty and pure. The reader laughs, but it is with a tear in his eye, which is one of the highest luxuries of feeling." And from that day to this "The Luck of Roaring Camp" and its companion stories have been generally regarded as unique and convincing dramatic sketches of strange, virile

Western types which could have existed only under the peculiar conditions of Californian life in the early fifties.

Deaths were common enough in "Roaring Camp," but births were not only a sensation, they were absolutely unknown. So that the expected birth of a child to "Cherokee Sal," the only woman in the camp, despite the fact that she was of the abandoned sort, was stirring excitement in all and even sympathy in a few. "You go in there, Stumpy," said a prominent member of the camp, familiarly known as "Kentuck." "Go in there, and see what you can do. You've had experience in them things." Stumpy, who had in other parts been the alleged head of two families at one time, was approved as a choice by the crowd of loungers outside the rude cabin where the prospective mother lay, and, bowing to the will of the majority, he disappeared behind the cabin door to act as extempore surgeon and midwife.

Outside, the assembled camp sat and waited and smoked. Among this lounging group of a hundred men there were some who were actual fugitives from justice, "some were criminal and all were reckless." Physically, there was no indication of their past lives written in their faces. "The greatest scamp had a Raphael face, with a profusion of blonde hair; Oakhurst, a gambler, had the melancholy air and intellectual abstraction of a Hamlet; the coolest and most courageous man was scarcely over five feet in height, with a soft voice and an embarrassed, timid manner." Closer scrutiny might have brought out certain physical deficiencies in the matter of fingers, toes, and ears, — the strongest man had only three fingers on his right hand and the best shot had only one eye.

About the fire of withered pine boughs bets were freely

offered as to the result within the cabin, — three to five that "Sal would get through with it" and that the child would survive. There were side bets also on the sex and complexion of the expected stranger. Suddenly, above the swaying and moaning of the pines, the rush of the river, and the crackling of the fire, rose a sharp, querulous cry, — a cry unheard before in that far-away camp of rough miners. They rose to their feet as one man; and although a barrel of gunpowder was proposed as a proper means of celebrating, only a few revolvers went off, for report came that Cherokee Sal was sinking fast.

Within an hour she died, and after the settling of some details the anxious crowd of men entered the cabin in single file. On a pine table, swathed in red flannel and deposited in a candle-box, lay the "last arrival" at Roaring Camp. And beside the candle-box rested a hat. "Gentlemen," said the extempore midwife Stumpy, in a tone of somewhat complacent authority, "Gentlemen will please pass in at the front door, round the table, and out at the back door. Them as wishes to contribute anything toward the orphan will find a hat handy." As the men passed by there were overheard comments like these: "Is that him?" "Mighty small specimen;" "Hasn't mor'n got the color;" "Ain't bigger nor a derringer." Among the contributions to the hat were a silver tobacco-box, a navy revolver, a gold specimen, a beautifully embroidered handkerchief (from Oakhurst, the gambler), a diamond breastpin, a slung shot, a Bible ("contributor not detected"), a silver teaspoon, a pair of surgeon's shears, a Bank of England note for five pounds, and two hundred dollars in loose gold and silver coin. Only one little incident broke the monotony of this strange procession. As Kentuck bent over the candle-box the child turned and

in a spasm of pain caught at his finger and held it fast for a moment. When he got outside the cabin Kentuck, holding up his finger, remarked in a rather pleased tone to a companion, "He rastled with my finger, the d——d little cuss!"

That night neither Stumpy nor Kentuck went to bed. When every one else had retired, Kentuck walked down to the river, whistling reflectively, then up the gulch past the cabin, then part way down to the river again, until finally he returned and knocked at the cabin door, which was opened by Stumpy. "How goes it?" said Kentuck, looking at the candle-box. "All serene," returned Stumpy. "Anything up?" "Nothing." There was an embarrassing pause, and then the foolishly anxious Kentuck, holding up his finger, exclaimed: "Rastled with it, — the d——d little cuss," — and withdrew.

In the ways and means suggested for rearing the newborn infant the suggestion that a female nurse be sent for met with no favor. No decent woman would be willing to make Roaring Camp her home, and "they didn't want any more of the other kind." It was at last decided to have Stumpy — in coöperation with "Jinny," the ass — continue to act as wet-nurse, — there was something original and heroic about the idea that pleased the camp. Certain necessary articles for the baby were sent for to Sacramento. "Mind," said the treasurer, as he pressed a bag of gold-dust into the expressman's hand, "the best that can be got, — lace, you know, and filigree-work and frills, — d——n the cost!" For some strange reason the child thrived and grew under the influence of Stumpy and the ass's milk, — "Me and that ass," Stumpy would say, "has been father and mother to him! Don't you," addressing the helpless bundle in the candle-box, "never go back on us."

When the baby was a month old there came the necessity for a name, — he had generally been known as "The Kid," "Stumpy's Boy," and "The Coyote" ("an allusion to his vocal powers"). These, however, were felt to be vague and somewhat unsatisfactory; and on the theory of Oakhurst, the gambler, that the child had brought "luck" to Roaring Camp, it was thenceforward to be called "Luck," with "Tommy" for a convenient prefix. No reference was made to the mother, and the father was unknown. "It's better," said the gambler, "to take a fresh deal all round. Call him Luck and start him fair." At the baby's christening, which was intended to be a screaming burlesque for which a mutilated church service, a godfather, and an altar had been prepared, little Stumpy suddenly stepped before the expectant crowd, and, looking them all stoutly in the faces, said: "It ain't my style to spoil fun, boys, but it strikes me that this thing ain't exactly on the squar'. It's playing it pretty low down on this yer baby to ring in fun on him that he ain't goin' to understand. And ef there's goin' to be any godfathers round, I'd like to see who's got any better rights than me." The first to break the silence that followed was the satirist himself, who acknowledged the propriety of Stumpy's position. Whereupon Stumpy proclaimed the baby, "Thomas Luck, according to the laws of the United States and the State of California, so help me God."

The unconscious influence of child life on a miners' camp was soon illustrated and in a remarkable way. The cabin itself was kept scrupulously clean and whitewashed; the rosewood cradle — "packed" eighty miles by mule — had, as Stumpy observed, "sorter killed the rest of the furniture," and so made necessary the rehabilitation of the whole cabin. The cabin's new interior so affected "Tuttle's grocery" that

it imported a carpet and mirrors. And even the personal appearance and cleanliness of the men was improved, for one of Stumpy's conditions was that "to hold The Luck" you had to be clean. One denial of such privilege had made Kentuck put on a clean shirt every afternoon, and he always came to see the baby "with his face still shining from his ablutions." For "Tommy's" repose, also, it seemed best to stop the shouting and yelling that had given the unfortunate name to the camp, but vocal music was regarded as a soothing element to be desired. So that "Man-o'-War Jack" was allowed to hold The Luck and sing his sailor song of "The *Arethusa*, Seventy-Four"; and it was a fine sight to see the rough old English sailor rocking from side to side and crooning to the child, while the men lay at full length under the trees at twilight, smoking, and listening to the ninety stanzas of the rather melancholy song. "An indistinct idea that this was pastoral happiness pervaded the camp." In the words of "Cockney" Simmons, "This 'ere kind o' think is 'evingly."

During the long summer days, on a blanket spread over pine boughs, The Luck would lie in the gulch, while the men were working below in the ditches; and they got to decorating this improvised bed with flowers and sweet-smelling shrubs, and bringing him clusters of wild honeysuckle and azaleas. Unconsciously the child was interpreting for these rough, hard men the beauty of nature all about them; and many were the wonderful treasures rescued from the woods and hillsides that "would do for Tommy." Naturally some remarkable stories as to The Luck's infantile sagacity were told, sometimes with a tinge of superstition in them. One day Kentuck, in a state of excitement, related an experience of his own: "I crep' up the bank just now,

and dern my skin if he wasn't a-talking to a jay bird as was a sittin' on his lap. There they was, just as free and sociable as anything you please, a-jawin' at each other just like two cherrybums."

It was a golden summer for Roaring Camp, — the times were "flush," and the claims yielded enormously. No immigration was encouraged, all the available land about the camp was preëmpted, and a reputation for good shooting tended to keep the seclusion of the camp inviolate. But the expressman used sometimes to gratify outside curiosity by his wonderful stories of the camp: "They've a street up there in 'Roaring' that would lay over any street in Red Dog. They've got vines and flowers round their houses, and they wash themselves twice a day. But they're mighty rough on strangers, and they worship an Ingin baby."

With all this prosperity came the desire to do more for Tommy, and it was even proposed to build a hotel and invite one or two decent families so that The Luck could have the advantages of feminine society. But alas for their high resolves and purposes! The winter of 1851 was remarkable for its heavy snows, and as the spring drew on every gulch became a roaring watercourse. The North Fork suddenly leaped its banks, dashed up the triangular valley of Roaring Camp, and in the night, amid the confusion of rushing water and crashing trees, Stumpy's cabin was carried away. Stumpy's body was found high up the gulch, but The Luck had disappeared. A relief boat, however, brought news that it had picked up a man and an infant, almost exhausted. The searchers knew at a glance that here was Kentuck, crushed and bruised, but still holding The Luck of Roaring Camp in his arms. The child was dead, and as they bent over Kentuck he opened his

eyes. "Dead?" said Kentuck. "Yes, my man, and you are dying too." With a smile on his face the expiring man repeated, "Dying! he's a-taking me with him. Tell the boys I've got The Luck with me now." And, together, Kentuck and the child floated out on the shadowy river that loses itself in an unknown sea.

As strange, rough types in the picturesque and rugged mining camp of fifty years ago, Stumpy and Kentuck will long survive; and through the art of the author unsuspected qualities of mind and heart are developed in them by the mute appeal of an abandoned woman's newborn child.

A unique and striking figure among the "Outcasts of Poker Flat" is Mr. John Oakhurst, type of the imperturbable, smooth, daring, and irresistible Western gambler, who, under unexpected conditions, develops unexpected qualities, — the qualities of practical sympathy and heroic self-sacrifice. He had been included among those who were destined to leave Poker Flat, for the community had recently lost several thousand dollars, two valuable horses, and a prominent citizen. Two of those destined for exile were already hanging to the boughs of a sycamore in the gulch; a secret committee had even considered the hanging of Mr. Oakhurst, one of the minority contending that "it's agin justice to let this yer young man from Roaring Camp — an entire stranger — carry away our money." The minority of the committee, however, was overruled, and Mr. Oakhurst was included in the "deported wickedness" that was escorted to the outskirts of Poker Flat by a body of armed men. In this expatriated company were a young woman familiarly known as the "Duchess," another called "Mother Shipton," and a third person, "Uncle Billy," a suspected sluice-robber

and confirmed drunkard. At the outermost edge of Poker Flat this company was set adrift, with the implicit injunction not to return, at the peril of their lives.

The "outcasts" decided on Sandy Bar for their destination, a camp that lay over a steep mountain range, a hard day's travel distant. At noon the Duchess refused to go farther, and the party halted, although scarcely half the journey to Sandy Bar was accomplished and provisions for delay were lacking. Mr. Oakhurst, the gambler, called it "throwing up their hand before the game was played out." But they were provided with whisky, if not with any adequate supply of provisions, and they were all soon in a helpless state of stupor — all except the gambler, who never drank, — it interfered, he said, with his profession and he "couldn't afford it." His thought seemed never to be that of deserting his feebler and more pitiable companions, as they lay in a drunken stupor amid the encircling pines, — precipitous cliffs of naked granite rising above them on three sides, and the crest of a precipice in front overlooking the valley. They were suddenly reënforced by an eloping couple going to Poker Flat to be married, and as the prospective bridegroom had once lost money to Mr. Oakhurst and had it considerately returned, he greeted the gambler as a genuine friend and was insistent on camping with his party, assuring Mr. Oakhurst that he had an extra mule loaded with provisions, and that there was a rude attempt at a log house near the trail. That night the women spent in the log house and the men lay before the door. Waking benumbed with cold, the gambler stirred the dying fire and felt on his cheek the touch of snow! Turning to where the thieving Uncle Billy slept he found him gone, and the tethered mules with him. At dawn the gambler recognized that they were "snowed

in," with all that implied in the loss of the trail and the cutting off of provisions and rescue.

In his unsuspected kindliness of heart Mr. Oakhurst, the gambler, was unwilling that Tom Simson and Piney, the eloping couple, should know the real rascality of Uncle Billy, and implied that the latter had wandered off from the camp and stampeded the animals by accident. And through the gambler's request the Duchess and Mother Shipton also gave out the same impression as to Uncle Billy's whereabouts. But Tom seemed rather to look forward to a week's camping with his sweetheart, and his gayety and Mr. Oakhurst's professional calm "infected" the others. From some unaccountable motive Mr. Oakhurst *cachéd* the whisky, and concealed his cards. And Tom somewhat ostentatiously produced an accordion from his pack, from which his sweetheart, Piney, succeeded in plucking a few reluctant tunes to the accompaniment of Tom's bone castanets. The lovers sang, too, a rude camp-meeting hymn, joining hands as they did so, and the defiant covenanters' swing of the chorus finally led the others to join in the somewhat prophetic refrain: —

> "I'm proud to live in the service of the Lord,
> And I'm bound to die in His army."

And above these doomed singers the pines rocked and the storm eddied.

In dividing the watch that night with Tom Simson, Mr. Oakhurst somehow managed to take upon himself the greater share of the duty, explaining that he had "often been a week without sleep" when luck at poker ran high. "When a man gets a streak of luck, — nigger-luck, — he don't get tired. The luck gives in first. Luck," continued

the gambler meditatively, "is a mighty queer thing. All you know is that it's bound to change. And it's finding out when it's going to change that makes you."

The nights were filled with the reedy notes of the accordion, but music failed to fill the aching void of insufficient food, and story-telling was suggested by Piney. However, Mr. Oakhurst and his female companions were hardly willing to relate their personal experiences in the presence of the Innocent, as they called Tom, or of "the child," as the Duchess and Mother Shipton called Piney; and this plan of diversion would have fallen through had the Innocent not been able to recall some of Mr. Pope's translation of the "Iliad," which he had chanced upon a few months before. He told the exciting incidents of the epic in the current vernacular of Sandy Bar. And he got an enthusiastic hearing, while the great pines in the cañon seemed to bow to the wrath of the son of Peleus. Mr. Oakhurst was especially interested in the fate of "Ash-heels," as the Innocent insisted on calling the "swift-footed Achilles."

A week passed over the heads of the outcasts, the sun again abandoned them, and the leaden skies sifted swiftly down upon them great banks of snow, till they stood more than twenty feet above the cabin. It became increasingly difficult to replenish the fires, and yet no one complained. The lovers looked into each other's eyes and were happy, but Mother Shipton seemed to sicken and fade. At midnight of the tenth day she called the gambler to her side, and said, in a querulous weakness of voice: "I'm going, but don't say anything about it. Don't waken the kids. Take the bundle from under my head and open it." It contained the rations she had saved for a week. "Give 'em to the child," she said, pointing to Piney. Starvation through

self-sacrifice was the unexpected ending of this abandoned woman's life.

With another unselfish motive coming to the surface, Mr. Oakhurst took the Innocent aside and showed him a pair of snow-shoes he had fashioned from the old pack-saddles. The gambler announced that if by the aid of these Tom could reach Poker Flat in two days, his sweetheart could be saved. Oakhurst pretended to accompany Tom as far as the cañon, unexpectedly kissing the Duchess good-by before he went. It stirred her with emotion and amazement; but the gambler never came back. The Duchess, feeding the fire during the fierce storm of wind and snow on the following night, found that some one had quietly piled beside the hut enough fuel to last a few days longer; and it was not difficult to surmise that it was due to the thoughtfulness of Oakhurst. The second night the two women were frozen to death in each other's arms — the soiled Duchess and the virgin Piney. "And when pitying fingers brushed the snow away from their wan faces, you could scarcely have told, from the equal peace that dwelt upon them, which was she that had sinned."

At the head of the gulch the searchers found on one of the largest pine trees the deuce of clubs pinned to the bark with a bowie knife; and on it was written in pencil, with a firm hand, "Beneath this tree lies the body of John Oakhurst, who struck a streak of bad luck on the 23d November, 1850, and handed in his checks on the 7th of December, 1850." And underneath the snow, with a bullet through his heart and a derringer by his side, lay the calm-faced gambler, whose hard life was softened and ennobled at its close by thoughtful sympathy and sublime self-sacrifice.

One of the more unusual and successful of Mr. Harte's

short stories in this volume is the very human and dramatic narrative of "How Santa Claus Came to Simpson's Bar." By reason of the heavy rains the North Fork of the Sacramento had overrun its banks and Rattlesnake Creek had become impassable. The bowlders that marked the ford at Simpson's Crossing were lost in the vast sheet of water reaching to the foot-hills; and even the stage and the mail had to be abandoned. The mud lay so deep on the mountain road that neither force nor profanity could lift the wagons from the miry ruts, and the way to Simpson's Bar was marked by broken-down teams and stranded vehicles. The weather, too, on that Christmas eve in 1862, could hardly have been worse; and Simpson's Bar, as it "clung like a swallow's nest to the rocky entablature and splintered capitals of Table Mountain," was smitten with high winds as well as threatened with high water.

That particular Christmas eve most of the population of Simpson's Bar were snugly gathered at Thompson's grocery, where a red-hot stove seemed to be the center of social interest, in lieu of more exciting diversions. For on account of the high water and consequent suspension of regular employment on gulch and river, there was naturally lack of money and whisky, which usually added so much zest to the somewhat questionable recreations of the inhabitants of the Bar. Even the professional gambler, Mr. Hamlin, was glad to get away with fifty dollars in his pocket, — all he could realize from the large sums he had actually won in the practice of his profession. His impression of Simpson's Bar was in the main complimentary, but not entirely favorable to it as a permanent place for a needy and ambitious gambler. "Ef I was asked," he once remarked, "ef I was asked to pint out a purty little village where a retired sport as didn't

care for money could exercise hisself, frequent and lively, I'd say Simpson's Bar; but for a young man with a large family depending on his exertions, it don't pay."

The group around the glowing stove in Thompson's store were sitting in a dull apathy, which not even the sudden splashing of hoofs outside was effective enough to arouse. Dick Bullen, the oracle and leader at Simpson's Bar, only paused in the act of scraping out his pipe, and lifted his head; but no one else in the silent circle made any sign of interest, or even an effort at recognition, when a man entered. It was the familiar figure of the "Old Man," who was apparently some fifty years of age, with scant and grizzled hair, a youthful complexion, and a face of ready sympathy that changed, chameleon-like, with "the shade and color of contiguous moods and feelings." Coming, evidently, from association with hilarious companions, he mistook the temper of the present company, and clapping the nearest man on the shoulder began to make what he considered an appetizing allusion to "the richest yarn" he had just heard from Jim Smiley, — "the funniest man in the Bar." When, however, the solemn judgment of the company was expressed to the effect that Smiley was a fool and a skunk, the Old Man's face discreetly changed to one of pessimistic assent, and he appropriately remarked on the dismalness of the weather. "Mighty rough papers on the boys, and no show for money this season. And to-morrow's Christmas." . . . "Yes," continued the Old Man in the lugubrious tone he had unconsciously adopted, "Yes, Christmas, and to-night's Christmas Eve. Ye see, boys, I kinder thought — that is, I sorter had an idee, jest passin' like, you know — that maybe ye'd like to come over to my house to-night and have a sort of tear round."

The only reply to his anxious invitation came from Tom Flynn, who wanted to know what the Old Man's wife thought about it. There was hesitation on the part of the Old Man, for this was his second wife, who had formerly been his cook, and she was large and aggressive. "Before he could reply, Joe Dimmick suggested, with great directness, that it was the 'Old Man's house,' and that, invoking the Divine Power, if the case were his own he would invite whom he pleased, even if in so doing he imperiled his salvation." Spurred to unaccustomed boldness by the subtle audacity of this suggestion, the Old Man sympathetically frowned, and replied: "Thar's no trouble about *thet.* It's my own house, built every stick on it myself. Don't you be afeard o' her, boys. She *may* cut up a trifle rough — ez wimmin do — but she'll come round." He was secretly relying on "the exaltation of liquor and the power of courageous example to sustain him in such an emergency."

And now spoke Dick Bullen, the oracle. Taking his pipe from his mouth, he inquired sympathetically: "Old Man, how's that yer Johnny gettin' on? Seems to me he didn't look so peart last time I seed him on the bluff heavin' rocks at Chinamen. Didn't seem to take much interest in it. Thar was a gang of 'em by yar yesterday, — drownded out up the river, — and I kinder thought o' Johnny, and how he'd miss 'em! Maybe now, we'd be in the way ef he wus sick?" The father hastened to assure the oracle that Johnny was better and that "a little fun might 'liven him up." Whereupon Dick Bullen, catching up a blazing brand from the hearth, made a leap into the night, with a characteristic howl, and his companions followed his example, leaving the astonished proprietor of Thompson's grocery alone in his deserted rooms. The gusty night wind put out the torches, but the

red brands went dancing and flitting up Pine Creek Cañon, "like drunken will-o'-the-wisps," till they reached a low, bark-thatched cabin burrowed in the side of the mountain. It stood at the entrance to the tunnel in which the Old Man worked when he worked at all.

Pausing out of deference to their host, who was the last to arrive, they waited under the eaves of the cabin while the Old Man went in to see that "things is all right." For a few moments there was no sound but the dripping of water from the eaves and the "rustle of wrestling boughs" above them. Then the men began to show anxiety, and their whispered suspicions passed back and forth: "Reckoned she's caved in his head the first lick!" "Decoyed him inter the tunnel and barred him up, likely." "Got him down and sittin' on him." "Prob'bly biling suthin' to heave on us; stand clear the door, boys!" Suddenly the latch clicked, the door slowly opened, and the weak treble of a small boy's voice said hospitably, "Come in out o' the wet." It was a boy's face that looked up at them, a face that might have been pretty, and even refined, "but that it was darkened by evil knowledge from within, and dirt and hard experience from without." He had a blanket about his shoulders and had evidently just risen from his bed. "Come in, and don't make no noise. The Old Man's in there talking to mar." As Dick Bullen caught the small boy up, blanket and all, and pretended to toss him into the fire, the little fellow querulously swore at him, crying out, "Let me be; . . . let go o' me . . . d' ye hear?"

Ranging themselves quietly round a long table of rough boards, the men watched Johnny as he gravely brought from a cupboard several articles which he laid upon the table. "Thar's whisky. And crackers. And red herons.

And cheese." He took a bite of the latter, and also scooped up with his small and very dirty hand a mouthful of the sugar he was carrying. Finally he added, in the lavishness of his hospitality: "And terbacker. Thar's dried appils, too, on the shelf, but I don't admire 'em. Appils is swellin'. Thar," he concluded, "now wade in, and don't be afeard. *I* don't mind the old woman. She don't b'long to *me*. S'long." With that Johnny stepped to the threshold of his little room just off from the main apartment, and stood there a moment, looking at the company and disclosing his bare feet through the folds of the blanket. When asked by Dick Bullen why he was going to "turn in," Johnny replied that he was sick. "I've got a fevier. And childblains. And roomatiz." With the last word Johnny suddenly vanished; and then, after a moment's pause, there came from the darkness within, and apparently from under the bedclothes, "And biles!"

There followed an embarrassing silence, which threatened to be as prolonged and as deep as that which surrounded the group at Thompson's grocery, when deprecatingly sounded from the kitchen the voice of the Old Man, lying to his irate second wife: "Certainly! Thet's so. In course they is. A gang o' lazy, drunken loafers, and that ar Dick Bullen's the ornariest of all. Didn't hev no more *sabe* than to come round yar, with sickness in the house and no provision. Thet's what I said: 'Bullen,' sez I, 'it's crazy drunk you are, or a fool,' sez I, 'to think o' such a thing.' 'Staples,' I sez, 'be you a man, Staples, and 'spect to raise h—ll under my roof, and invalids lyin' round?' But they would come,—they would. Thet's wot you must 'spect o' such trash as lays round the Bar." Whereupon a burst of laughter rose from the listening men; and whether it was overheard

in the kitchen or whether the wrathful wife, having exhausted all her other modes of contempt, was giving her last exhibition of temper, the back door was suddenly slammed with great violence. In a moment the Old Man himself reappeared, happily unaware of the cause of the recent hilarious outbreak, and smiling blandly, remarked, "The old woman thought she'd jest run over to Mrs. McFadden's for a sociable call."

Till nearly midnight the festivities of Christmas eve were continued, when from Johnny's little room came the querulous cry, "Oh, dad." Dick Bullen, holding up his hand, said, "Hush," and the Old Man hurriedly disappeared in the bedroom. "His rheumatiz is coming on bad," said the father, on his reappearance, "and he wants rubbin'." But, alas! the demijohn on the table was empty. The men set down their tin cups, in their generous anxiety, and the Old Man hopefully remarked that he reckoned the whisky in them would be enough. He enjoined them to wait till he got back, and disappeared with the whisky and an old flannel shirt.

Through the partly closed door was distinctly audible this peculiar dialogue: "Hevin' a good time out yar, dad?" "Yes, sonny." "To-morrer's Chrismiss,—ain't it?" "Yes, sonny. How does she feel now?" "Better. Rub a little furder down. Wot's Chrismiss, any way? Wot's it all about?" "Oh, it's a day." There was a silent interval of rubbing, and then Johnny's voice was again heard: "Mar sez that everywhere else but yer everybody gives things to everybody Chrismiss, and then she jest waded inter you. She sez thar's a man they call Sandy Claws, not a white man, you know, but a kind o' Chinemin—comes down the chimbley night afore Chrismiss and gives things to chillern,

— boys like me. Puts 'em in their butes! Thet's what she tried to play upon me. Easy, now, pop, whar are you rubbin' to, — thet's a mile from the place. She jest made that up, didn't she, jest to aggrevate me and you? Don't rub thar. . . . Why, dad!"

In the great quiet that followed could be heard the sighing of the neighboring pines and the dripping of the leaves. Johnny's voice grew lower as he went on: "Don't you take on now, for I'm gettin' all right fast. Wot's the boys doin' out thar?" Through the partly opened door the Old Man could see his guests sitting there sociably enough, with a few coins and a lean buckskin purse lying on the table. "Bettin' on suthin', some little game or 'nother. They're all right," he replied to Johnny, and renewed his rubbing. Johnny expressed a wish that he could take a hand and win some money, and the Old Man glibly repeated his old formula of consolation that when he struck it rich in the tunnel Johnny would have lots of money. "Yes," said Johnny, "but you don't. And whether you strike it or win it, it's about the same. It's all luck. But it's mighty cur'o's about Chrismiss, — ain't it? Why do they call it Chrismiss?" But whether from deference to the ears of his guests, or from "some vague sense of incongruity," the Old Man's reply was so low as not to reach the outer room. "Yes," said Johnny, with slighter interest in his voice, "I've heerd o' *him* before. Thar, that'll do, dad. I don't ache near so bad as I did." Asking his father to wrap the blanket tightly about him, and to sit down by him till he went to sleep, Johnny disengaged one hand from the blanket, and, taking hold of his father's sleeve to assure himself that he was there, he finally fell asleep.

The unusual stillness in the house prompted the Old Man

to open the door with his disengaged hand, and look into the main room. What was his surprise to find it dark and apparently deserted. But at that moment a sudden flame from the smoldering log leaped up and lighted the face of Dick Bullen, sitting alone before the dying embers. Dick explained that the rest had gone up the cañon and that he was waiting for them. The Old Man stared at Dick as if he were drunk, and, in fact, his face was flushed and his eyes moist — but not from liquor. Dick defended himself from the implied charge by remarking: "Liquor ain't so plenty as that, Old Man. Now don't you git up," he continued, as the father made a movement to release his sleeve from Johnny's hand. "Don't you mind manners. Sit jest whar you be; I'm goin' in a jiffy. Thar, that's them now." And saying good-night to his host, he disappeared in the night. The Old Man, drawing his chair closer to the bed, rested his head upon it, and under the influence of his earlier potations soon fell asleep.

Meanwhile, outside, Dick Bullen was preparing for a fifty-mile ride, through the night and the surging waters, in search of toys for Johnny's Christmas morning; but before he started he reëntered the cabin, tiptoed into the little room where the sick Johnny and his father lay asleep, and bent down over the little boy as if to kiss his forehead. Suddenly, however, an inconsiderate blast swept down the chimney and rekindled the hearth, and Dick fled in foolish terror.

Once more with his companions at the crossing, he stood ready to mount the mare Jovita for his perilous night ride. Two of them were struggling with her in the darkness. "She was not a pretty picture. From her Roman nose to her rising haunches, from her arched spine, hidden by the stiff *machillas* of a Mexican saddle, to her thick, straight, bony

legs, there was not a line of equine grace. In her half-blind but wholly vicious white eyes, in her protruding under lip, in her monstrous color, there was nothing but ugliness and vice." "Now, then," said Staples, "stand cl'ar of her heels, boy, and up with you." A leap, a struggle, a play and jingle of spurs, a plunge, — and then the voice of Dick Bullen sounded out from the darkness, "All right!"

At one o'clock he had only gained Rattlesnake Hill, owing to Jovita's rearing and plunging and mad shooting off on a tangent with the bit in her teeth. Down the long hill that led to Rattlesnake Creek Dick pretended to hold her in by swearing at her and by well-feigned cries of alarm; whereupon Jovita ran away, as Dick intended she should, and made the long descent to the creek in a record-breaking time that became a tradition of Simpson's Bar. At Rattlesnake Creek, under her acquired momentum, they made a mighty leap into the rushing current, and after much kicking and wading and swimming she brought Dick safely through to the opposite bank. At two o'clock he had passed Red Mountain, and a few minutes later the driver of the fast Pioneer coach was overtaken. At half-past two Dick rose in his stirrups and gave a great shout, for there beneath the stars that glittered through the cloud rifts towered two spires and a flagstaff, and in a few minutes Jovita and her rider drew up before "The Hotel of All Nations" in Tuttleville.

Giving Jovita over to the care of a sleepy hostler, "whom she at once kicked into unpleasant consciousness," Dick Bullen made a sally with the barkeeper through the sleeping town. Avoiding the few saloons and gambling houses that were still open, they knocked at several closed shops, whose proprietors sometimes cursed but oftener showed interest in

Dick's unusual errand of buying some Christmas toys for a sick little boy in Simpson's Bar. At three o'clock Dick had his toys for Johnny snugly safe in a small waterproof bag strapped on his shoulders, and springing to his saddle he dashed down the deserted street and out into the lonelier plain, from which the lights of the town, the spires, and the flagstaff sank gradually into the earth behind him.

Toward dawn, as Dick was singing and allowing the reins to rest lightly on Jovita's neck, she suddenly shied. A highwayman grasped her bridle, and another commanded Dick to throw up his hands. Jovita rose straight in the air, threw off the figure with a vicious shake of her head, and "charged with deadly malevolence on the impediment before her." There was an oath, a pistol shot, and then Jovita was a hundred yards away, with the arm of her rider, shattered by a bullet, hanging helplessly at his side. His only fear now was that he would be too late. The morning stars had begun to pale, and the distant peaks stood out blackly against a lighter sky. He felt a roaring in his ears, due perhaps to exhaustion from loss of blood; but he at last had reached Rattlesnake Creek, which now had doubled its volume and rolled a resistless river. For the first time the heart of Richard Bullen sank within him; but casting off his coat, his pistol, his boots and saddle, and binding his precious bag of toys tightly to his shoulders, he gripped the bare flanks of Jovita with his naked knees, and with a shout dashed into the rushing water. A cry arose from the opposite bank at sight of the struggling man and horse, and then horse and rider were swept down the mad current in the midst of uprooted trees and whirling driftwood.

A little later, at the log cabin in Simpson's Bar, the Old Man woke at dawn to hear a sudden rapping on the door;

and as he opened it he fell back with a cry before the dripping, half-naked figure that staggered against the doorpost. It was Dick Bullen, and his first question was, "Is he awake yet?" Assured that the sick little Johnny was still asleep, he asked for some whisky. But alas! for the exhausted rider, when the Old Man returned it was only with an empty bottle. Dick caught at the handle of the door and said eagerly: "Thar's suthin' in my pack yer for Johnny. Take it off. I can't." And when the Old Man unstrapped the pack and laid it before Dick, there were only a few cheap toys covered with tinsel and paint — one broken, one ruined by the water, and one stained with a cruel spot of blood. "It don't look like much, that's a fact," said Dick regretfully. . . . "But it's the best we could do. . . . Take 'em, Old Man, and put 'em in his stocking, and tell him — tell him, you know," — the Old Man hastened to support Dick's sinking figure, — "tell him," said Dick with a foolish little laugh, "tell him Sandy Claus has come." And Richard Bullen, who came in so unexpected a guise as Santa Claus, fell fainting on the threshold, as the Christmas dawn came slowly up, "touching the remoter peaks with the rosy warmth of ineffable love. And it looked so tenderly on Simpson's Bar that the whole mountain, as if caught in a generous action, blushed to the skies."

Of such generous impulses, easy daring, and unconsidered self-sacrifice as Dick Bullen's were some of these pioneer types compounded, even if with these qualities went others that were sadly incongruous. And the same strange mixture of traits is seen in the dirty and profane little Johnny, who was yet as hospitable in heart and as tender in his affection as the Old Man who sat patiently by his bed that Christmas night and showed the real love of a father.

Whether one becomes absorbed in the story of "Mliss," the willful but devoted little schoolgirl of Smith's Pocket; or in the pathetic sketch of "Miggles" and her helpless "baby" Jim, who had once been her extravagant admirer, but had been smitten into imbecility by a "stroke"; or in the unavailing generosity of "Tennessee's Partner"; or in that dramatic ride of Dick Bullen and Jovita, across the torrent of Rattlesnake Creek, that "Sandy" Claus might come in time to Simpson's Bar, — it would be difficult to say in which of these stories may be found the deftest touches in the characterization of those strange pioneer types that live again through the picturesque genius of Bret Harte.

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